INTERNET

Romance of the French Abbeys

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To my dear Louis

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By ELIZABETH W. CHAMPNEY

ROMANCE OF THE FEUDAL CHÂTEAUX.

ROMANCE OF THE RENAISSANCE CHÂTEAUX.

ROMANCE OF THE BOURBON CHÂTEAUX.

ROMANCE OF THE FRENCH ABBEYS.

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BY

ELIZABETH W. CHAMPNEY

The Child Saint Louis Giving Alms at the Portal of the Abbey of Saint Denis.

From the painting by V. Lesur.
(By permission of Neurdein.)

ILLUSTRATED

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press
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AUTHOR OF "ROMANCE OF THE FEUDAL CHÂTEAUX," ETC.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

MY HUSBAND

WHO PLANNED THIS VOLUME

AND TO MY SON, WHO AIDED IN EXECUTING THE WORK

IT IS LOVINGLY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

SCATTERED throughout the length and breadth of France, almost forgotten in their out-of-the-way nooks, the abbeys, though forsaken and ruinous, still afford fascinating shrines of pilgrimage to the thoughtful tourist.

The architect will find in them the entire development of the Romanesque and Gothic styles and the first dawn of the Renaissance. He will feel a brother's pride in the achievements of the architect monks of Cluny, who travelled even into other nations building the abbeys of their order, as well as in the engineering exploits of that other brotherhood who wore the red hammer embroidered upon their sleeves, the Frères Pontifes, or bridge-builders, who spanned great rivers with fortified bridges which endure to this day, that pilgrims might journey to the Holy Land, and while constructing the Pont Saint Esprit, which crosses the Rhone, believed that the divine Son of the Carpenter laboured with them. He will trace the history of stained

glass in the shattered windows of the abbeys, and that of goldsmithry and enamelling in the chalices and reliquaries preserved in the museums as precious examples of the riches which once filled their "*trésors.*" He will admire in their grilles the noble craft of the iron-worker, in their choir stalls that of the wood-carver, and in their tombs the art of the sculptor. The spoils of the scriptoria in the National Library of Paris alone will awaken wonder at the immense patience and skill of the illuminators; and though France can boast of no painter-monks to rank with Fra Angelico and Fra Lippo Lippi, her debt to her monasteries in the department of letters is deeper than that of Italy. They were the first universities, their monks the first historians, and they furnished a refuge not alone for saddened and penitent hearts, but a career for refined and scholarly minds.

Of such absorbing interest is the art of the abbeys that the connoisseur may be pardoned indifference to their creators, should he say of them with Browning:

"They might chirp and chaffer, come and go,
For pleasure or profit the men alive,
My business was hardly with them I trow,
But with empty cells of the human hive;

"With the chapter-room, the cloister porch,
The church's apsis, aisle or nave,
Its crypt one fingers along with a torch,
Its face set full for the sun to shave."

The empty hives are themselves fast passing from the scene. The massive walls of masonry, which neither the disintegrating forces of nature nor the fierce hatred of religious wars has been able utterly to demolish, are being turned to secular uses. The suppression of the religious orders, decreed at the time of the French Revolution, has at last been very thoroughly effected. Distilleries, factories, barracks, prisons have been established in some of the noble buildings; some have been entirely razed, often the chapel only subsists as the present parish church; others serve as quarries for the neighbourhood, and only a few are protected by the government as historical monuments or are lovingly cherished by private owners.

Certain itineraries found especially delightful by the author in different vagrant summers, in Provence, Savoy, Burgundy, Isle de France, and Normandy, are outlined in the last chapter of this volume; but the present age is one of change, and he who would see even the ruins of the abbeys must act quickly.

The student of history, the lover of the great drama of human life, will find in them an interest different from that of the artist, an irresistible desire to reconstruct in imagination the state of society, the mood of mind, and form of faith which not only reared them, but made them in their time a beneficent influence. He will tell us how it happened that at the close of the "Dark Ages," the year 1000 A.D., dawned a true millennium, and with the incredible spread of monasticism and the building of many hundred abbeys [1] a tidal wave, not alone of religious revival, but of civilisation, swept over France. He will explain how, in an age brutal and unscrupulous beyond our conception, persecutors and tyrants stood suddenly abashed before the denunciation of the Church,

[1] The Benedictines alone at the time of their greatest prosperity boasted thirty-seven thousand monasteries, of which a great part were in France.

The *Monasticon Gallicarum*, a book written in 1645 by Dom Michel Germain, a Benedictine of the Congregation of Saint Maur, gives plates of one hundred and sixty-eight *great* French abbeys of his order and time.

We sketch the marvellous history of the Abbey of Cluny, with its hundreds of dependent abbeys, and of its rival Citaux. In less than twenty-five years after the founding of the latter abbey it sent out sixty thousand Cistercian monks, and in 1790 three thousand six hundred monasteries acknowledged her rule.

and kings like Robert II., in fear of her judgments, gave up their best beloved at her mandate, while Jezebels such as Queen Bertrade retired to lives of humiliation in convents.

We Protestants may at first say, patronisingly:

> There 's something in that ancient superstition,
> Which, erring as it is, our fancy loves;

but as we study the development of the system we must acknowledge that in its beginning at least it was divine.

It is not within the scope of the present volume to tell how the good fruit ripened and rotted, how Pope Leo X. placed in the hands of Francis I. the power of nominating his favourites as commendatory abbots, and how the evil grew so that in 1788 there were fifteen thousand ecclesiastical sinecures under royal appointment, and abbots were sovereign princes and sybarites took the places of saints until, as Dante foretold, the flood came and destroyed them all.[1] The author is neither

[1] "The walls for abbeys reared are turned to dens.
. . . . Jordan was turned back
And a less wonder. Thus the refluent sea
May at God's pleasure work amendment here."
Paradiso, Canto XXXII.

archæologist nor sociologist, but a *trovère* of romance. She has brought back from her pilgrimages only a few incidents which have moved her in the history of her best-loved abbeys: legends of the Saints Bernard and Francis from Clairvaux and the Abbey of Montmajour; a tale of chivalrous adventure from a Commandery of the Knights Hospitallers; the story of the ambition of one of the artisan monks of Cluny; an echo of the horror of the Inquisition which still lingers about the dungeon walls of Carcassonne, and the portal of Saint Ouen; the tradition of the flowering of a woman's love in the Gothic arches of the abbey church of Brou; a fantasy from Saint Denis of the childhood of Saint Louis; a burlesque from the playwrights of the miracle spectacles from Fécamp; chronicles of passions which wrapped like flames the abbey fortresses of Vezelay and Mont Saint Michel during the strife of Huguenot and Leaguer; and from the lovely ruin of Saint Wandrille a story of the revival of faith in the Jesuit missions at the time when France was most faithless.

If she is asked what romance can be found in communities which strove to eliminate the eternal feminine, she can only cite Hallam,

who finds that love plays but a subordinate rôle in mediæval romances, which, he asserts, repose equally on three columns—chivalry, gallantry, and religion.

And are not such ambitions as the love of achievement and of fame in scholarship and in art, the love of power, and the love of struggle for the mere joy of the fight—such enthusiasms as devotion to one's abbey and one's order, or purely to humanity—emotions as worthy of the soul of man, and as interesting to the observer in their development as the love of woman?

Moreover, that love was not always wanting. Often it existed so purified from passion that it became a mystical sentiment, supernatural and transcendent. Sometimes alas! (though not so frequently as cavillers would have us believe) human nature was too frail for such sublime renunciation, and tragedies like that of Abélard and Héloïse, as well as the pathetic self-sacrifice of nobler souls, point the moral of these tales—that the mistake of monasticism was celibacy.

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ROMANCE OF THE FRENCH ABBEYS

CHAPTER I

THE GOLDEN MYSTERY

"THAT is what all the wise ones called it, Madame. They were as much puzzled as the simplest when the old Abbot Heribert's tomb was opened and all that golden glory flashed before them.

"They had gathered from far and near, for the great architect Monsieur Viollet-le-Duc had come from Paris to make such restorations as he thought fit in this ancient Abbey of Vezelay, and it was surmised that interesting discoveries might be made.

"So, when my father, who was master-

mason, with his force of assistants, lifted the lid of the sarcophagus in that canopied niche,—a heavy lid, as Madame sees, for the effigy of Abbot Heribert was carved upon it, —all the learned ones who stood around craned their necks like the gargoyles over the church door.

"They had read the record of the saintly life of this good man who lived and died away back in the tenth century, for it is engraved in Latin on the brazen plate. His statue, too, has a certain dignity even in its mutilation, robed in full canonicals with its thin hands piously folded over its quiet breast. To have found those carven vestments duplicated in costly stuffs would have surprised no one, but a cry of astonishment echoed through the church when it was perceived that the gorgeous robe of cloth of gold now revealed was a woman's, that the form it shrouded was a woman's, and a little woman's at that. The tiny pinched face was framed in black hair, which swept from under a red velvet cap to the very tips of her dainty shoes.

"But what changed the first dazzled exclamation of admiration of the queenly gem-broidered robe to one of horror was the sight

of a ghastly, gaping wound in the little lady's forehead, the frontal bone crushed to splinters by some murderous blow, and the beautiful hair torn and clotted.

"When the corpse had remained for a time exposed to the air it crumbled to dust, but the gold threads in the woof of its dress were pure metal and did not vanish with the rest. The government claimed the robe and it was carried away to some museum.

"The learned ones wrangled long over the 'Golden Mystery,' as it was popularly named, and some said it was the robe in which Queen Eleanor listened here at Vezelay to the preaching of the Second Crusade by Saint Bernard, and that she had sent it to the Abbey as a souvenir of her visit. But none could solve the riddle of why it shrouded the little lady with the fractured skull, nor why she should have been laid to rest in the Abbot's tomb.

"Golden and grim it remained a mystery to those learned ones, but its solution has been granted to me, Madame, simple peasant though I am, for I have pondered and brooded over it all my life, and have pieced together every scrap of history that has fallen in my way, and all the legends of the old people,

until suddenly one night I saw it all crystal clear, and knew that only in this way could it have happened. It was when my father told me that among the bits of bones, which the learned ones had overlooked in the dust of the tomb, he had found a finger-joint and on it a marriage ring with the initials 'O. de C. to E. de H.' I have the ring and the bit of blackened bone still, Madame, to witness if I lie."

Our guide, Martin Quatrevaux, tugged at a stout string which encircled his neck and drew from his bosom a soiled chamois-skin bag, and from the bag the relic of which he spoke. If a forgery it had been cunningly prepared, and the man's face was too honest for the most sceptical to harbour suspicion. Beside the initials there was the date 1569, and everything was clear.

"Odet de Coligny to Elizabeth de Hauteville!" we exclaimed, and Quatrevaux nodded gravely.

"Madame is not like certain other tourists who visit Vezelay," he said, "Madame is not so ignorant as one might suppose, while those others—*croyez vous*, I have shown the ring to certain imbeciles who not only could not guess for what names the initials stood, but

had never even heard of the great Colignys. Sheep—calves! Is it possible that human beings can be so idiotic?"

"We know very little more, Quatrevaux," we replied, "beyond the fact that the brother of the great Gaspard de Coligny was, before his excommunication, Abbot of this magnificent Abbey."

"And afterward, Madame. It was not until the Mother Church cast him out that Odet de Coligny troubled himself greatly about Vezelay. Cardinal at sixteen, Archbishop of I know not how many wealthy sees, and flattered at Court, he had little use for this lonely fortress. But when he took his stand with the Huguenots and fought by the side of his great brother the Admiral at the battle of St. Denis, and was excommunicated and banished, tracked and betrayed, and in danger of his life—then the monks of Vezelay (who had already been converted to Protestantism by one of their own number, Théodore de Bèze) acclaimed their heretic Abbot, and this Abbey became his sure castle of defence.

"It was not just on account of his religion, I'm thinking, but because along with that he had shown himself a worthy successor of

the old fighting Abbots of Vezelay, for that is the tradition—the Abbey is a citadel, the strongest in this part of Burgundy, and its lords have ever been more expert with the mace than with preaching. Come out on the terrace, Madame, and look at the walls and tell me if Vezelay is not a place to tempt men to be obstinate and to have the courage of their opinions."

Such it was and still is, for the ruins of this citadel Abbey of Vezelay rise on an isolated spur of one of the mountain ranges of the Morvan, lonely and invincible even in their decay, a fortress that a handful of men might still hold against an army.

Invincible the Abbey has always remained through all the storms of war which have swept through Burgundy. Its fighting Abbots were distinguished even before the English invasion, when Hughes de Maison Comte was made prisoner with his men-at-arms at the battle of Poitiers.

It was during this Abbot's imprisonment in England that Vezelay fortified itself still more strongly, that the massive encircling walls and huge sentinel towers sprang up which enabled its monks to laugh defiance when English Edward III. cavalcaded by

GENERAL VIEW OF VEZELAY.

FORTIFIED GATE, VEZELAY.

their very gates, and which guarded the Abbey inviolate through every subsequent attack.

Knowing as much as this it was pleasant to find an enthusiast in the guide who showed us Vezelay. A Protestant, like many of the descendants of the refugees who sought asylum here during the sixteenth century from the massacres in Lorraine, he had preserved a certain isolation from his Catholic neighbours, and united to great simplicity a dignity of speech and more of intelligence than is usually to be met with in the French peasant. He cherished a positive worship for the memory of Odet de Coligny, and his spirited wife, Elizabeth de Hauteville, and he firmly believed the story which he told us of the heretic Abbot and the noble woman whose love during the last decade of his adventurous life was his guiding star, and, in despite of the doom which dogged his steps and finally overtook him, was also his exceeding great reward.

"It all began in this way, Madame. Odet de Coligny was pacing this terrace one fair evening in June very much as we are doing now—looking out on the level champaign which stretched away all green with growing

crops and pasture until it met the darker forest-covered hills. The scent of the Annunciation lilies in the Abbey garden was borne to him on the soft air, and the nightingales were singing in the acacias. But his heart was burdened with care, not for himself alone, but for his hot-headed monks, an obstinate flock, determined to wander far from the fold of the Church with which he was then hoping for reconciliation.

"Slowly the sunset faded and a white mist rolled over the plain like the tide of doubt and perplexity which was overwhelming him. He lifted his heart to God, beseeching a sign that he was not forsaken, and suddenly, just above the line of the hill yonder to the northeast, a star glittered, blue as a great sapphire. Other familiar stars wheeled into sight and moved through the heavens, but this strange new one neither rose nor disappeared, but hung low on the horizon, piercing the dark with its steady radiance.

"He gazed at it long and wonderingly, and retired to dream that an angel had lighted it in answer to his prayer. He awoke in the early morning with this conviction, and opening his casement saw the star still shining, though dawn had brightened the sky above

it and other stars were dim, and not till the sun shot up in all its glory did its light entirely go out.

"Now, if the Abbot had known as much as Madame probably does about astronomy, he would have recognised that this was no heavenly body, but even so it might have seemed to him the more miraculous, for through the perplexing days that followed, he was upborne by the thought that the star was a pledge of sustaining grace. Night after night he sought and found it. Its pure calm beam entered his very soul and filled him with celestial peace, helping him to bear his heavy weight of responsibility and to move with serene dignity in the midst of this great crisis of his life.

"The Abbot was returning late one night from a conference with Condé at his brother d'Andelot's Château of Tanlay. He was mounted on his white mule Humilité, while his valet Gaucelim jogged behind him, and it was an unspeakable consolation as he neared Vezelay to see that his star was shining calmly above the opposite range of hills.

"'Ave Maria Stella Maris,' he chanted, and Gaucelim followed questioningly the direction of his master's gaze.

"'Do you not see it, Gaucelim?' the Abbot asked, 'my star—lighted by my good angel for my benediction?'

"'That is no star, my master,' Gaucelim replied, 'but a *feu follet*, a will-o'-the-wisp sent by the evil one to mislead travellers. I saw it as I was coming back to Vezelay from visiting my sweetheart at Chastellux. It is not in the sky as it appears from this side of the hill, but is a little dancing fire that flutters over the old burial-ground on the Col de Mont Joie. I saw it move from the gate to the little mound in the centre, where stands the old disused *lanterne des morts*. There it paused, and, as I was curious as to what this might signify, I entered the cemetery and found a tiny taper burning in the glass globe which stands on the stone pillar. But there was no one in the lonely graveyard; the sexton lives in the valley below and never visits it except to dig a grave. It came over me that some ghoul or ghost had lighted it to work an evil spell on Christians, and I ran up to it and beat out the flame with my hat. When I was half-way down the hill I looked back and I saw that it was lighted again, though I had left no living soul in the burying-ground and no one had passed me on the road.'

"Odet de Coligny was not so superstitious as to believe his valet's theory that the lamp in the old *lanterne des morts* had been lighted by ghosts; the thing must have some natural explanation. Accordingly, late the following afternoon he mounted Humilité and rode away alone in the direction of the graveyard on the hill. He found, as Madame will to-day if she takes the trouble to visit the spot, a row of tombs backed against the wall on every side, and the space so fenced in filled with crosses and slabs adorned with wreaths of bead-work, which tinkled elfishly in the evening breeze. In the very centre of the square, with four paths leading up to it, stood the *lanterne des morts*, a pinnacled pillar with a tiny *phare* (lighthouse) protected by glass, where in other times a lighted lamp was hung by pious hands. But no one had been buried here for years, the cemetery was remote and the hill steep, and the custom had long fallen into neglect. The shadows deepened and the Abbot was about to turn from the cemetery when suddenly a gleam of light twinkled in one of the tombs. He had only time to step behind a yew tree when the grille grated harshly on its rusted hinges, and a figure clothed in white issued from the

sepulchre, holding in one hand a taper floating in a blue glass. The spectre, or maiden, walked rapidly to the *lanterne des morts*, placed the little light in its niche, and knelt for a moment at the base in prayer. The Abbot stepped impulsively from the shelter of the yew tree with a 'Peace be with you, my daughter.'

"In spite of the words intended to be reassuring, the startled girl fled with a faint cry to the tomb from which she had appeared, and closed the iron gate behind her. Through its bars the Abbot could see that the tomb had another door at its back, opening through the wall of the cemetery into the park of a country residence. The young woman had neglected, in her haste, to close this door and he could see her fleeing across the greensward toward a small château, that of Mont Joie, belonging to the old Comte de Hauteville.

"The Abbot smiled. The lady was evidently a member of the Count's household, and was in the habit of entering the cemetery by the family tomb to tend this lantern for the lonely dead, because she herself dreaded the dark. It was a strange result of his discovery that his supposed star was only a lamp lighted by human hands, that its beam still

continued to exercise the same sustaining effect upon his spirit. He looked for it each evening, and prayed that its unknown guardian might receive the same comfort in her own troubles which all unwittingly she had ministered to him.

"Why make a long story when what followed is so evident? After that the Abbot was a frequent visitor at the Château of Mont Joie—he loved the very name, and found it strangely appropriate—and he met Mademoiselle also at his brother's Château of Tanlay, or at Condé's at Noyers, for the Protestant nobility drew together in these troublous times. It was written in heaven that they should belong to each other. When Elizabeth de Hauteville was away from home, Odet de Coligny knew it, for no star beamed for him, and forthwith an ungovernable restlessness possessed him, and he called for Humilité and ambled away to Noyers to visit his dear cousin of Condé: but if Elizabeth were not there, Condé's discussion of politics became to him as the vain patter of the rain upon the eaves, and he felt it incumbent upon him to fare farther to assure himself of the health and well-being of his brother d'Andelot.

"She was at Tanlay on the breaking out of

the second civil war, and herself buckled on his armour before he set out for the battle-field of St. Denis. D'Andelot was shouting to his brother that his Vezelaian arquebusiers had arrived and were demanding their commander, and that it was time to be off. They had but an instant more together, but in that instant all barriers were swept away like stubble before devouring flame, and Odet de Coligny knew that his excommunication had brought him the greatest blessing of his life.

"The campaign was a short one, and on his return to Tanlay Théodore de Bèze, now the Admiral's chaplain, united him to Elizabeth de Hauteville in the little chapel, in the presence of the Coligny family, the Condés, and a few other true and tried friends.

"The marriage was not immediately made public, and Elizabeth returned to the Château Mont Joie, to be near her husband and to await certain negotiations which it was believed would put the Protestants on an equal footing with the Romanists. It was at this juncture that the *lanterne des morts*, at first so piously tended, with no thought of any personal gain, became a means of communication between them. They developed an alphabet of flashes by means of alternately

shading and displaying the light and shooting it from different sides of the lantern. Odet, who dabbled in chemistry, gave her a preparation of lime which burned with intense brilliancy and could be seen even on cloudy nights. They could now hold long conversations with each other, and though peasants occasionally noted the shooting beams they universally attributed them to the *feux follets*, the ghost fires or will-o'-the-wisps.

"Soon the Abbot had many serious matters to communicate to his wife. Both Protestants and Catholics were preparing quite openly for the third religious war, the bitterest and longest which had distracted France. The Protestant leaders were encouraged now by messages from Jeanne d'Albret that she would meet them at the first sign of the breaking out of hostilities at La Rochelle with her young son, Henri of Navarre, who burned to serve his first campaign under Gaspard de Coligny.

"The eyes of all France were soon to be fixed on this young hero. Already that serpent of a woman, Catherine de' Medici, recognised him as a power to be reckoned with, crushed if possible, conciliated if he could not be crushed. He stood very near

the throne. If her sons left no heirs he was the next in line. Very soon her plots would succeed, and she would marry him to her beautiful daughter, Marguerite de Valois. But while she schemed the Colignys also formed their plans. The one hope for Protestantism in France lay in the intervention of England. If Queen Elizabeth would espouse their cause, the King of France would not dare coerce his subjects of the Reformed Faith. The Virgin Queen was much older than the King of Navarre, then but fifteen, but age does not matter in royal alliances. It was agreed to send an ambassador to offer the Queen of England the hand of Henri of Navarre—and Odet de Coligny was selected as the one who could best perform this mission, and his wife was secretly preparing to accompany him.

"Gaucelim had Coligny's sumpter mules loaded with necessities for the journey and was at his door with Humilité in the early dawn of the sixth of October, 1569, and the Abbot, bidding farewell to the chosen few who had been informed of his intended mission, was about to set foot in stirrup, when the great alarm-bell of the monastery rang out peal on peal, and the warden came

running to tell him that the plain was alive with galloping artillerymen, who were hurriedly drawing up their pieces in a threatening attitude before the gates of the Abbey.

"It was the advance guard of the royal army under General Sansac, which had surprised them. They were in a state of siege, and with the exception of the false varlet Gaucelim, who ran away that night, not so much as a mouse might enter or issue for many weary months from the beleaguered Vezelay.

"It was not so easy a matter to reduce this impregnable Abbey as Sansac had imagined. The monks were courageous, and made many sorties, surprising and inflicting great loss upon their besiegers; though they could not entirely drive them away. But Sansac had come to spend the winter, and he waited for all his battalions to arrive and especially for Marshal Famine, well knowing that the beseiged would fight with less heart when their stomachs were empty.

"He had chosen for his own headquarters the Château of Mont Joie because it gave so extended a view of the plain to the east of Vezelay and of the monastery itself. He left the de Hautevilles in possession of the

wing nearest the little graveyard, but told them that they must submit for their own safety to certain rules of his making, one of the most important of which was that they must not leave the grounds of the château. So they were both his prisoners and his hosts, for he ate at their table.

"Elizabeth noted with satisfaction that the guard of the château patrolled the outer wall of the cemetery and that her access through the family tomb to the *lanterne des morts* was unimpeded. She could still hold communication with her husband, and she established it that night, sending him advices from the enemy's very headquarters. It was a great comfort to her to receive his answering signal, as it was to Odet de Coligny to know that she was unmolested. They cautiously avoided too frequent communication and for a time it was undiscovered.

"The siege of Vezelay continued all winter. Sansac trained his guns on the fortifications of the monastery to no effect. His army dwindled, hundreds of men were killed in the sorties during the winter, while the mortality among the besieged was very trifling.

"But when spring came the crisis on which Sansac had counted arrived. Provisions be-

gan to give out in the Abbey. The arms of the windmill whirled as busily as ever, but it was a feint to deceive the besiegers, for the granaries were empty—there was no wheat to grind. And now, with insufficient and poor food, the pest broke out, and each day the body of an emaciated monk was laid in the little burying-ground of the Abbey. Odet told Elizabeth of their sore need, but she, a prisoner, was powerless to help him, until one day to her great surprise she recognised among the hangers-on who awaited in the castle court an audience with General Sansac, who but her husband's valet, Gaucelim. The recognition was mutual, though Gaucelim avoided her gaze, and as there were others present she could not have told that his indifference was not feigned had she not been warned by Odet of his desertion. Filled with curiosity as to his mission with General Sansac, she was minded that the General's favourite chair was close beside a window which opened into the garden, and that the shrubbery beneath it was dense enough to screen an eavesdropper. She slipped to the garden, and under hiding of the flowering bushes stole close to the open casement, and was presently rewarded by hearing the

conversation between the General and Gaucelim. The traitor spoke first of her.

" 'Do you know, my General, that you have the Abbot of Vezelay in your power? Mademoiselle de Hauteville is his *bien aimée* and maintains a correspondence with him in some way that I have not been able to discover. Through her you can entrap him if you but allow her to lure him from the Abbey. You can do even more. I know of a surety that Odet de Coligny has letters of importance which he was to carry to England. I would have lured him with them into your power had you but stayed your coming a few hours, but you discovered yourself before he had left his citadel.'

" 'So,' replied the General; 'why did you not persuade the Abbot to allow you to carry them to Mademoiselle and make her his carrier pigeon?'

" 'He would not trust me,' Gaucelim replied; 'but he trusts her. You must hatch your own plot to make him confide the letters to her and then squeeze them from her. I give you the clue, it is surely worth something.'

" 'It is worth a hundred crowns to you if it amounts to anything,' the General replied,

musingly. 'You say that Coligny trusts you not, but trusts Mademoiselle. She doubtless knows that you were once in the employ of her lover. You have delivered letters to her ere this. Could you not persuade her that you come from him now, and bear back a letter in her hand which would make even him trust you with the packet from La Rochelle?'

"'I might get a missive from her,' said Gaucelim, 'but I like not the idea of facing the Abbot again. Nevertheless I will try, for the Abbot is confiding and forgiving, and his love for her makes him blind. Also I would like those hundred crowns. Let me think out a plan, for there are more ways than one to skin a cat. Meantime to our other business. The monks of Clairvaux have sent a train of provisions to Vezelay, great tuns of wine from their vineyards of Chablis, and waggonloads of barley and wheat from their granges. The train will halt to-day in the forest of Aigremont awaiting information from me as to the best means of getting into the Abbey. I am supposed to be now in conference with Abbot Odet and am to return to them at midnight and convoy the train to that gate of the monastery least under your surveillance. You have but

to tell me which route to take, and where your men would prefer to fall upon them to capture the entire train.'

" 'Good,' said Sansac; 'but will the monks fight?'

" 'Not a monk ventures from his monkery; the carters are but stupid peasants who know not whither they are bound. They will run like deer at the first sound of firing.'

" 'A master-stroke,' chuckled Sansac; 'bring them by the Col de la Croix de Mont Joie. The gorge is narrow—we will take the carts one by one as they cross the bridge. We will let the yokels escape, if they make no resistance. I will myself be in the old tower to broach the first cask of Chablis. You are a rare forage-master, and shall be rewarded for this, Gaucelim. We will send the Abbot a bottle as a sample of what he has lost. Get to bed now in the loft over the stables, for your eyes are heavy, and you have more owl's work for this night. Take the white horse in the stall at the left of the stable when you set out, for he is the best of the stud. The password to-night everywhere is "The King's business." We shall have a merry meeting when you return, but drink not till I give you leave—it is your weakness, my lad.

I will send you a stirrup-cup when you start. See you take no other.'

"Elizabeth tiptoed from her hiding-place, thinking hard and fast. Would no good angel inspire her with some scheme to outwit this knavery? Suddenly she saw her opportunity, and she hurried to the still-room of the château where she had often assisted her hostess in the preparation of medicaments for the poor of the neighbourhood. She took a flask of the strongest liqueur of the good monks of La Grande Chartreuse, poured out a glass, and refilled the flask from another bottle labelled 'Syrup of Poppies, For the Solacing of those Sleepless through great Pain.'

"Calling a page, she bade him take the drugged liqueur to a young man whom he would find in the stable-loft.

" 'Tell him,' she said, 'that General Sansac sends it to him for it has power to quicken the wits, and will warm his heart for the adventure which he has before him.'

"She could do nothing further until nightfall, when she lighted the lamp in the *lanterne des morts* for the last time. 'Heaven send,' she prayed, 'that Odet sees my signal.' He saw it instantly. Famished and despair-

ing, he had been pacing his terrace when the calcium ray shot its white finger across the sky.

"'Make a sortie at three this night,' the moving finger wrote, 'on the Nevers side of the Abbey.'

"Odet de Coligny hastily lighted his own beacon.

"'I will be on the road with the best force I can muster; but what is on hand?'

"Again the beam darted its welcome news:

"'Your brethren of Clairvaux will send you supplies from that direction. There is only a feeble guard to the west of Vezelay; do not let them cut off your succour.'

"There was little time for dalliance in conversation with her beloved, but she told him how she had learned this good news through Gaucelim's treachery, and warned him to beware of him on all occasions. Then, bidding her husband a hasty farewell, she shaded the taper with her fingers and climbed to the stable loft where she counted on finding Gaucelim overcome by the sleeping potion and where she had intended to don his clothing and so take the road and lead the provision train to Vezelay.

"What was her consternation to find the

loft vacant, as well as the stall which should have contained the white horse. Gaucelim had supposed that the General had anticipated the time set for his start and he had already started upon his errand. Had he suspected then that the liqueur was drugged? But no, the empty flask lay by the door of the stable. He had drunk every drop as he set foot in stirrup.

"'It will work its power upon him,' she thought, 'as he rides. He will be maudlin when he reaches the train; in no condition to give his message. I can still circumvent him.'

"She looked about her eagerly: a great riding-coat, boots, and hat belonging to one of the couriers hung in the harness room, and she donned them, hiding her petticoats in the hay. Then she led her own mare from its stall, and as she did so a sleepy groom stumbled in and demanded what she was about.

"'The King's business,' she replied, fortunately remembering the pass-word.

"'The Devil's rather,' the groom grumbled, but he put a man's saddle on the mare and fitted her heels with spurs, for a servant came from the château with a flagon of spiced wine, and presenting it to Elizabeth, said:

"'The General sends you this stirrup-cup, as he promised, and bids you hasten.'

"She made as if she drank a portion and handed the cup to the groom while the General's servant accompanied her to the drawbridge and wished her a lucky adventure as she rode cautiously down the steep incline. The castle clock boomed ten when she struck the level road and gave the mare her head. She had two hours to make the fifteen kilometres to reach the provision train at the time that Gaucelim had promised that he would return, and it was important that she should reach it first. It was the first time that she had sat a horse in six months, and she was riding now cross-saddle in a manner to which she was not accustomed, but she braced her feet in the stirrups and the realisation that she was outside her prison walls, free, free! was like wine to her spirits. She did not ride, she fairly flew. There was no moon, but it was a clear star-lit night, and the road stretched white before her. A sentry barred her passage as she rode through a village, but at the words, 'The King's business,' he lowered his piece, with the question, 'How many of you are abroad to-night?'

"'I am the last,' said Elizabeth; 'hold

any one who follows me till you are certain of his credentials, for there be spies about. How long ago was it that my comrade went by?'

"'If you mean a drunken fellow on a white horse, nigh half an hour—but the King would best not send many such messengers, for the sot could hardly hiccough the password, and were it not that his horse carried him gingerly, he could not have kept his seat.'

"He had done better than she had hoped in keeping it thus far, but Gaucelim had learned to sleep in the saddle, and had taken many a long ride in a tipsy condition.

"Elizabeth began to fear that she would not overtake him, and if he reached the rendezvous in the wood of Aigremont before her the carters would not believe any word of hers to his discredit, for she was a stranger, and the monks of Clairvaux had placed the train in his care. Suddenly her mare shied at a huddled heap in the road and nearly threw her. She leapt from her saddle. It was Gaucelim, lying stupefied, but otherwise unhurt. While she dragged him behind the hedge, the white horse whinnied and trotted up to her. He had had a rest of some

twenty minutes and had not been ridden so hard as her own, and Elizabeth turned her exhausted mare into the neighbouring field—glad of a comparatively fresh steed. Then she divested Gaucelim of his doublet and hose—it was an old livery worn while his master was Cardinal—and she kissed the scarlet hat embroidered on the breast, and clothed herself with care, for at daylight the exigencies of her present costume would be apparent.

"She made a pretty page, but her hair was long and she hacked at it savagely with Gaucelim's rapier. Hastily mounting, she struck out again much cheered by this piece of good luck. A lamp shone from the terrace of Vezelay. Her husband was sending her a message, but from this different point of view she could not read it. She was cheered, however, by the knowledge that he was thinking of her. 'By dawn I shall be with you, my own darling,' she laughed and threw him a kiss as she rode, thinking gleefully of his surprise and delight. How many times in the old days before he had broken with Rome she had asked him to let her visit Vezelay, but he had been obdurate. No woman's foot must enter the monastery, and Protestant

though he was even then at heart, he would not break down the discipline of the rule of St. Benoit, or have it said that he had violated the sanctuary and corrupted his monks by his example. Now she was coming in spite of his prohibition, and they would never, never be separated more.

"She reached the forest of Aigremont at the time appointed, just as the carters were breaking camp.

" 'You are to divide the convoy,' she explained. 'The wine is to make a long circuit by the way of Mont Joie, but all the grain by the direct route through Asquins.'

"There was ruse in the order. The great tuns of Chablis would arrive at the ambuscade as expected and convince de Sansac that his plan had succeeded, and that the rest of the train was simply delayed and would soon follow. While he and his men were carousing she would get the grain into Vezelay on the other side of the promontory.

"This was in fact what occurred, but as the train of provisions approached Vezelay in the grey of early morning, Elizabeth saw a fierce combat in progress between the monks who had issued from the monastery and the videttes stationed at an outpost to guard

against such a sortie. The carters were braver than Gaucelim had reported them, and hastily unharnessing and mounting their heavy draught horses the score of men came lumbering across the plain, plumping into the melée and attacking the soldiers in the flank with the only weapons which they carried, their murderous whips. The long snake-like thongs circled and cracked with reports like those of firearms and horse and man gave way, borne down by the impact of the charge.

"Odet de Coligny had led his men with such recklessness that he had burst through the enemy's line and reining in Humilité was circling back to his monks, when the carters made their onset. There was no sign of the provision train and in the obscurity of the dawn and the confusion of the hand-to-hand encounter he took them for a reinforcement of the enemy, and when Elizabeth rode recklessly toward him waving her light rapier and shouting '*Au secours!*' he did not recognise her. As she came near, her mantle streamed backward and he recognised Gaucelim's livery, with his own Cardinal's hat embroidered in red on the tabard of the tunic, and his hasty thought was that the traitor had trapped him.

"He rose in his stirrups and hurled his mace with all his force—and Elizabeth fell headlong at his feet.

"A moment later the enemy had vanished as though blown away by a whirlwind, and as the carters reharnessed their horses and brought up the provision train, the Abbot saw that he had mistaken the intentions of the youth who had ridden so madly toward him, and crying 'Gaucelim, my poor boy, forgive me,' knelt beside him.

"Then with a more intensely bitter cry, 'My God, my God, what have I done?' he lifted the slight form in his arms and rode back to the Abbey.

"It was like their tender-hearted Abbot, the monks said to one another, that he should feel this deep remorse for the death of this lad at his hand by sad misapprehension of his motives. But when the brotherhood were summoned to the Abbey church to take part in the requiem mass they were transfixed with wonder to see lying upon the bier before the high altar a girlish form robed in the chiefest treasure of their sacristy, the dress of cloth of gold, given to the Abbey by Queen Eleanor. The light of the tall candles that flanked the bier fell upon their Abbot

kneeling by its side, while the chaplain who intoned the service bade them pray for the soul of the noble lady Elizabeth de Hauteville de Coligny, Countess of Beauvais, true and honourable wife of the most unhappy Odet de Coligny de Châtillon, sometime Abbot of Vezelay."

"Quatrevaux," we said, "your story does credit to your inventive powers, but unfortunately for its credibility it is a known fact that Elizabeth outlived her husband, who was poisoned in England by his valet in 1571. It is therefore manifestly impossible that Odet de Coligny could have slain her in this melodramatic way."

"Madame is perfectly right as to her facts," Quatrevaux replied, with imperturbability, "but Madame picks me up a little too hastily. I never said that the Abbot killed his wife, or *gave the date* of her death. God was better to Odet de Coligny than he feared, for his mace had not touched Elizabeth, but had struck her horse between the eyes, and she had been simply stunned by her fall. As the Abbot carried her on his saddle-bow back to Vezelay he felt the pulsing of her heart against his own, and the convulsive drawing of her breath as she regained con-

sciousness, and he strained her the more closely to his breast.

"Calling the brotherhood together in the Chapter House he presented his wife to them and told them all the truth. They cheered her until the vaulted roof rang again, as well they might, for the provisions which she had brought in saved them all from famine and enabled the Abbey to hold out until Sansac, despairing of reducing it, drew off his army after an ineffectual siege of eight months, having in that time fired—all to no purpose—upwards of three thousand volleys from his great siege guns and lost fifteen hundred of the King's soldiers.

"Elizabeth accompanied her husband to England, where, thanks in great part to the interest which Queen Elizabeth took in her, Odet de Coligny prospered in his embassy. The Queen gave him cannon, munitions of war, and a hundred thousand angelots for the French Protestants. She was listening favourably, too, to the proposals of Henri of Navarre when Catherine de' Medici put the bloodhound Gaucelim upon the Abbot's track, who poisoned him precisely as Madame has related.

"Elizabeth de Coligny returned to Mont

Joie. She tended the *lanterne des morts* with ceaseless solicitude, and believed that her husband answered her with star-signals. When she died, an aged woman, the monks of Vezelay claimed her body, and wrapping it in the Golden Mystery laid it in their richest tomb, as a fitting acknowledgment to one who had done so much for them."

"Quatrevaux, Quatrevaux," we remonstrated, "you are a sad rogue, though a clever one. I fear you forget that horrible fracture in the forehead of the skeleton. If not made by the Abbot's mace, how do you account for that, my friend?"

Our guide's lips curled contemptuously.

"Madame is very curious about unimportant details. I have already explained that the lid of the sarcophagus was very heavy. It slipped from my father's hand as he was removing it, and, much to his regret, the skull of the then unknown woman was crushed. Madame must not impute to me any intention of deceit. It is the exuberance of Madame's own imagination, and no lie of mine, which has suggested that Elizabeth de Hauteville de Coligny died any other than a peaceful, natural death."

CHAPTER II

THE MASTERPIECE OF FRÈRE PLACIDE

"NOW what can Frère Placide want of the Abbot, I wonder," grumbled Frère Elbertus to the pretty lace-maker, Margot, as they stood a little apart from the throng waiting in the garden for audience with the Abbot of Cluny.

"Very much what you and I want, I fancy," replied Margot; "some favour of Monseigneur."

"But what can it be?" persisted the custodian of the scriptorium. "You have brought some of your beautiful lace for the border of an alb. I crave his attention to work of my illuminators; but a blacksmith! gr-r! Is a prince of the Church like Dominique de la Rochefoucauld likely to be interested in kitchen fire-irons? It makes me ill to see an

ignorant pounder of metal give himself such airs. Figure to yourself, Margot, I have twice warned him from the scriptorium. What business has he who cannot read the learned tongues with our precious manuscripts? And yet there he was, studying the ivy-bordered pages of the precious missal which the Duc de Berry presented to the Abbey. And what do you imagine the rascal did last week when I refused him quill and inkhorn to trace the strap-work ornament on the copy of the Koran which a Saracen of Toledo transcribed for Peter the Venerable? Why the *drôle* brought a ball of stout twine and braided the pattern in the same intricate fashion. Imbecile! How is it possible that a sane man should amuse himself twiddling strings?"

"That is what I used to ask myself," replied Margot. "He often comes to our house to watch me at my lace-making and to turn over my patterns. At first I thought it was for old acquaintance sake, for we played together as children. Not at all, for at last he brings with him a bit of pine board and a stick of charcoal, and makes free to draw off the very passion flowers which I have worked in this lace, and then

the secret was out. He was after designs for his metal-work, and 't is marvellous how he can tease and twist the iron into coiling tendrils and beat it into crumpled petals. Have you not marked the scroll-work in the bracket-sign which hangs before the locksmith's booth in the marché? He is no ordinary farrier. Placid waters run deep, they say, and Frère Placide deserves his name."

"Placid indeed!—stagnant rather," retorted Frère Elbertus; "he has not even the spirit to resent injuries. Will nothing ever make him angry? Look at him now. That bully Odo has twice hurtled against him, and he stands unresentfully staring up at the clock-tower, as though it took more than a glance to note the time. Staring, and smiling, is he waiting like a baby to see the figures come out, think you?"

It was precisely what Frère Placide was doing. He loved at all times to watch the great mechanical clock, for, at the time of striking, two bronze blacksmiths issued from doors on either side and beat the hours, with alternate strokes, upon an anvil gong. It seemed to the simple artisan-monk no mean tribute to his craft that the artificer of the

clock should have chosen brawny smiths for his statues and have set them up on high, at the entrance of the Abbey church, for all to admire. In his pleasure in watching them bend to their task he did not forget that they were striking the hour of the Abbot's audience. Margot was right when she said that still waters may run deep. The name of Placidus had not come by chance, but had been bestowed on him during his novitiate by common accord of the brotherhood as to its fitness. Gentle by nature, his clear eyes, blue as some unruffled lake, allowed you to look into the depths of his tranquil soul, unperturbed by any passion except the passion for his art. No one could have suspected that the interview which he was awaiting without visible impatience or excitement marked a crisis in his life, that admiration and love of the Abbey had taken the place in his heart of the love of woman, and the ambition of the artist swelled his soul to leave it a masterpiece which would render it for ever glorious.

For this he had toiled for years, but lack of time deferred the realisation of his hope. There was always some staircase ramp or balcony, or work of less importance, to be

executed. In hours snatched from sleep he had thought, and sleeping dreamed, until the design of a noble grille took shape in his mind. He knew the very place for it. The choir was closed in by a double *jubé*, or rood-screen, of antiquated and coarse workmanship. He would substitute intricate metal-work which would lend the sparkling lights and rich adornment of the high altar the fascination of mystery.

Such a task would demand the labour of years, and Frère Placide had seen the sands of his life slipping away, day by day wasted upon trifling objects.

He had been faithful and uncomplaining, outwardly as calm as ever, but his patience hid a haunting fear that possibly he might not be permitted this dearest desire of his heart.

If only the Abbot would come to Cluny and take other interest in his Abbey than in drawing its revenues. And at last Dominique de la Rochefoucauld, Abbé Commendataire, had visited his benefice, and Frère Placide had plucked up courage to ask an audience with the great man to explain to him his cherished scheme.

What manner of man was this courtier

Abbot? he wondered. One branch of the de la Rochefoucaulds had been Huguenots during the religious wars. They were all brilliant men as well as great nobles. But this was no sufferer for conscience' sake. All the better for the hopes of Frère Placide—he was less likely to be a contemner of luxury and beauty. Would he prove a patron of art, like Jean de Bourbon? More likely he cared only for his own indulgences and aggrandisement, and the timid monk almost regretted his hardihood when the porter bade him enter the audience chamber.

The Abbot's face was kindly and Frère Placide poured forth his aspirations as he laid his drawings before him.

Dominique de la Rochefoucauld did not immediately examine them, he studied instead the face of the enthusiast, and a great pity showed itself in his own.

"My son," he said, "this is a most ambitious desire on your part. To realise it you should have not only genius but education. By what master have you been taught? Have you travelled and seen the masterpieces already created? You know, I presume, that exquisite work in iron is now being produced. The Abbot of Saint Ouen

at Rouen has just erected a grille of such beauty in his abbey church that the King himself envies its possession. You have not seen it of course, but Sens is nearer, and the Archbishop boasts that his gates are finer than those of Saint Ouen. Then, last of all, there is the ironwork of Jean Lamour at Nancy. Can you rival that?"

Frère Placide spread his hands deprecatingly: "I have never been taught. I have never been away from Cluny."

"My poor fellow! What, then, can you hope to do?"

"Nothing, Monseigneur," and Frère Placide patiently extended his hand for his drawings.

"Wait a moment, I will at least look at them," and the Abbot bent over the papers.

Frère Placide could not see the scorn which he felt in the ominous silence, and his own abashed gaze was fixed upon the pavement when de la Rochefoucauld finished his scrutiny of the designs.

"It is as I supposed," the Abbot said at length; "the plans betray your lack of teaching. Why, the veriest tyro among Parisian apprentices could present a more showy set of drawings. You must give up

this work under the *Prieur Claustral*, the making of locks and hinges for the new cloisters, and go back——"

The Abbot paused, for he noticed that Frère Placide, though calm as ever, had turned white.

"Man," he exclaimed, "you misunderstand me. There is no occasion for such despair. I said that without genius and education you could do nothing, but lack of education can be supplied, and, my son, you have what never can be acquired—true genius—and you shall forge your gates, only first you must see what your rivals are doing and you must go back—not to your booth in the market—but with me to Paris. You shall live with me there at our town house which Jacques d'Amboise built for the Abbots of Cluny. There is some very pretty work in that little palace, and you shall study and surpass the best that France has to show. Sit down, if your trembling legs will not sustain you, and my cellarer will bring you a cup of wine. Two glasses, François, and we will drink to the new grille. I shall invite the Abbot of St. Ouen to visit me when it is finished, as he did me, to show me Nicolas Flambart's screen, and shall have the laugh

WING OF CLUNY PALACE AT PARIS.
By permission of Levy et Fils.

ENTRANCE OF CLUNY PALACE AT PARIS.
By permission of Levy et Fils.

on him, too, for you have twice Flambart's genius."

De la Rochefoucauld bettered his promises, and Frère Placide proved that he merited his Abbot's confidence. For twenty years he laboured upon his screen, twenty years of enthusiastic toil, mingled with the privileges of travel and study. At last, in 1785, his masterpiece was completed.

It was a great day for Cluny when, the last rivet having been set, the grille was unveiled by the Abbot in the presence of a vast concourse. The Abbey choir chanted the Magnificat, and as Frère Placide listened to the triumphant pæan, "He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted them of low degree," he knew that he was signified in the "exaltavit humiles." But the chant had a double meaning, and, musing on the "deposuit potentes," the face of the very noble lord Abbot, Dominique de la Rochefoucauld, prince and peer of the realm, was very grave, and his heart like lead. As a man of the world he knew the signs of the times, and foresaw that France would soon fall on evil days. Perhaps this would be his last visit to the Abbey—for he was already considering the possibility of flight.

But Frère Placide knew nothing of the storm which was gathering. He was growing old and would achieve no more masterpieces; but he laboured industriously upon the orders which the fame of his artistry now brought to Cluny. It was purely commercial work for which he would receive no renown and not even the poor guerdon of pecuniary profit, for the important sums received went to the Abbey, and his vow of poverty held; but he was content, for had he not accomplished his heart's desire? Every day he visited his gates, and felt of the delicate tracery, or gloated over it with his eyes, and knew that it was beautiful.

But at last, in the summer of 1789, Cluny woke to a realisation of what was going on in France. A band of brigand *sans-culottes* roving through Burgundy attacked the Abbey in the hope of pillage; but the townspeople rose *en masse* and drove them away, and ever through the troubles which followed showed themselves true to their loved Abbey. They could not stand, however, before the will of the National Assembly, and two years later the monks were ejected from their home, which was declared the property of the nation.

GRILLE OF ABBEY CHURCH OF SAINT OUEN, AT ROUEN.

Even then the anxiety that racked Frère Placide was not for himself. "What will become of our glorious church?" he asked.

"Have no fear," replied the intrepid Mayor of Cluny, "the town will purchase it, for we will never allow so magnificent a monument to perish."

In his trouble Frère Placide was consoled by the thought that his work had helped make the church beautiful, and that this beauty would melt the hearts of despoilers and help to save it from destruction. Calmly the aged man took his old place at the humble locksmith's booth under the swinging key in the town market, and the townspeople gave him orders for andirons, cranes, and pot-hooks for their chimneys, and brought him misfit keys to file and clumsy utensils to mend, as in his first apprenticeship.

Brother Elbertus, custodian of the scriptorium, was more unhappy than he, for revolutionary marauders from turbulent Mâcon had made a bonfire on the fair-grounds, and had burned all of the precious manuscripts which he had not been able to conceal, together with the wood carvings of the church.

Frère Placide saw the iconoclastic mob

surge through the sacred edifice, decorating themselves with costly vestments, rifling the *trésor*, and feeding the flames with altar candles and waxen votive offerings, and, while his heart ached for the wanton sacrilege, he thanked the saints that he had chosen to make his masterpiece, not of gold or gems, which might tempt the cupidity of thieves, or of perishable materials like the illuminations of the scriptorium and Margot's exquisite lace, but of enduring iron.

"And not till the earth itself shrivels in flames," he thought, "will *my* iron again feel the fire!"

False hope and futile comfort. A few days before the old man's eightieth birthday, in the winter of 1794, a long train of carts, escorted by soldiers, halted before the Abbey church. Margot came running breathless to the locksmith's booth crying, "Frère Placide, Frère Placide, come quickly; they are taking down the bells from the *clocher* to be melted into cannon, and have sent men to your forge for sledge hammers to break up your gates!"

For the first time in his life excitement showed itself in the face of the placid monk, and he hastened to the church, where a crowd of townspeople had gathered before

him. His friend, the Mayor of Cluny, met him at the door. "Come away, dear Frère Placide, you must not see what they are doing. I have told them that it is against my interdict, but they have authority higher than mine. The nation requires all our iron and bronze for the manufacture of arms. See, the masons have broken out the little central column in the upper arcade of the *Tour de l'Eau Bénite*, to allow the passage of the great alarm-bell, the one that is never rung except in time of danger, or tolled but on the death of an abbot. It is tolling now as though it knew our calamities."

The workmen had indeed neglected to muffle the tongue of the bell, and it boomed ominously as it was lowered from its place in the Tower of the Holy Water. But Frère Placide's quick ear caught other sinister sounds above the hoarse reverberations of the bell; the blows of heavy hammers on resonant metal, and alas! the crash of rending iron and sharp jangle of fragments falling upon the marble floor.

The lace-maker clung to him, but he flung her aside and dashed up the chancel. Yes, they had dared to strike his heart's treasure, and were breaking out the central panel.

The emblems of the Saviour's passion, the three nails, the spear, and the hammer came flying in his face as he ran forward to prohibit this sacrilege.

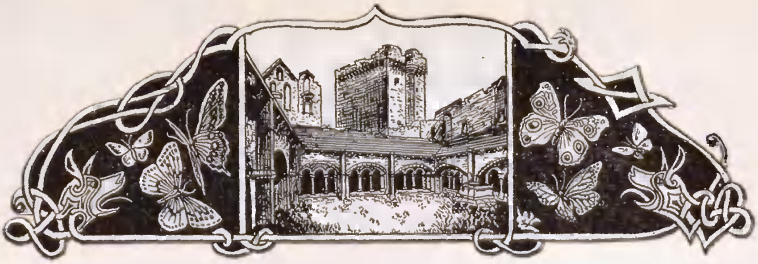
Instantly a great change transformed the mild monk. None would have said that this raging giant deserved the name of Placidus. He wrenched a sledge hammer from the hands of a smith and whirled it about his head. Workmen and soldiers fled from him, and he stood alone in the entrance to the choir like a madman at bay. The panic lasted but for a moment. At a safe distance from his powerful arms the sergeant drew up his squad, and a dozen gun-barrels covered Frère Placide.

"Lay down your weapon and leave the building, or I give the order to fire!" commanded the officer.

But Frère Placide did not hear. Something had snapped within his brain and his face turned purple. With his left hand he grasped the broken grille for support, his eyes saw only blood, and the hammer sank slowly to his side. He made no attempt to obey the order, and no one dared approach the motionless figure which stood so menacingly on guard.

"One, two, three, fire!"

The order rang out relentlessly, but before the quick volley obeyed the command Frère Placide fell forward before his ruined masterpiece, untouched by the bullets that flew over him, for the man who was never angry in all his life had died from intensity of unaccustomed rage.



CHAPTER III

THE WOLF OF ST. FRANCIS

"I 've drunk sheer madness! Not with wine,
But old fantastic tales miraculous."

A LITTLE aside from the direct route as one goes from Arles to Les Baux through Mistral's wonderful country stands the ruined Abbey of Montmajour. Its beautiful cloister, a gem of twelfth-century art, is brought into vivid contrast by a grim donjon keep, which guarded the only approach, and kept the artist monks safe from all marauders while they illuminated the manuscripts which made their abbey famous.

There lies before me a stray leaf of their illumination, the gift of a collector, bordered with floral arabesques in blue, upon a background of what appears to be the most exquisite niello, a style of decoration copied from the metal work of their Lombard neigh-

bours. The graceful scroll-work intertwines a grotesque bestial figure with a fiend's body and a wolf's head and claws. From the jaws of this creature are escaping delicately painted butterflies, the symbol of the human soul.

Why this strange combination? I wondered, and I turned to the text thus intricately framed for an explanation of the caprice of the illuminator.

It was the beautiful canticle of Saint Francis of Assisi, who visited Arles in the latter years of his life and was the honoured guest of the Abbey of Montmajour. I recalled his sensitive, tender nature, overflowing with love for every created being; how, when interrupted in his preaching by the twittering of swallows, he said to them:

"My little Sister Swallows, keep silence until I have finished my discourse, after which ye shall praise God" (see Note A).

What had this gentle saint to do with fiends and wolves? The answer was given me by a MS. in old French script, between whose leaves the enriched page had been found. Was it genuine or a forgery? The owner cannot say, and as I found it I give it without gloss or voucher. If the story seems wild

and impossible, read it after a visit to the Abbey of Montmajour and the wind which howls ceaselessly through the desolate castle of Les Baux may lend it the *vraisemblance* which the writer has not been able to evoke.

THE CONFESSION OF UGO DES BAUX

I, Ugo, Lord of Les Baux and of seventy-eight other fiefs, King of Arles and Vienne, make this my humble confession to the glory of God and to the ever-blessed Francis of Assisi. Which confession I leave in the hands of the Abbot of Montmajour, to be kept sealed as a pledge of my repentance, and to be made public only in case of my relapse into mortal sin, and especially into the sins of arrogance, suspicion, and cruelty, which are the besetments of our race.

Imprimis: be it at the outset plainly understood that in no such wise have I offended against that pearl of all women, Barrale, daughter of the very noble Barral, Viscount of Marseilles, and beyond all desert on my part my own true wife, save in that one moment when the lightning of God visited me with swift and incredible chastisement.

Nor was it without great provocation that my affection for my friend, Pierre Vidal, was turned into the bitterness of hatred. This I say not for my own exculpation but for the more perfect understanding of this my confession.

It was at Marseilles that I first saw Vidal. He was a hanger-on at the court, a writer of love-poems to the Viscountess Alzais, mother of the sweet Barrale whom I had come to woo. The rogue was a merry companion, one who charmed men as well as women, and we were soon inseparable. I told him of my love for Barrale, and I know that he envied me, for his flaunted devotion to her mother was but policy, since no troubadour can win fame save through the patronage of some noble lady. And Vidal wrote sonnets not only for distinction but for silken attire and dainty food, for he was poor. These the Viscountess gave him for a time, but in the end his forward manners pleased her not and she had him banished from the court.

Somewhiles after this I found him in sore misery at Arles, for he had boasted of another lady's favour, and her husband had caused him to be seized by his men-at-arms and with his own dagger and hand had slit his tongue.

In pity for his suffering I took him to my castle of Les Baux, and there my wife nursed him, and I gave him trustingly of my hospitality and friendship until the serpent's tongue was healed and could tempt and lie as before.

It was at Arles, whither I had gone with my wife for a few days' diversion, that I learned how vilely he had repaid my kindness. A friend who had lately returned from Avignon, where Vidal was carousing, told me that he had boasted of my wife's infatuation and of my stupidity, and that I was the jest of the town.

It galled me more that he should have traduced us in Avignon than if it had chanced in any other city in the world, for its inhabitants are hereditary enemies of my family, and I need not to recall how they took my father by treachery, flayed him alive, and hung his mutilated corpse above their gates. Therefore when my friend told me of their scoffing, though this villainy had been committed when I was a babe and Simon de Montfort had abundantly avenged it, and though I had promised holy church on the cessation of hostilities to relinquish my right of vendetta, all my hatred for the men of Avignon flamed

forth, and I swore that I would serve Pierre Vidal as they had served my father, and send his felon carcass to Avignon as a warning that whoso laughed at the liar's jests should have like treatment.

Though an old wound had been opened in the memory of my father's murder, it must be understood that its smart was as nothing to the rage which devoured me when I thought of my unfaithful friend; and all possibility of taking pleasure having departed from me I ordered my horses and sleigh to be brought to the door, my servants to follow with our luggage in another sledge, as I chose to drive, and bade my wife to prepare herself at once to return to our castle.

She was vexed, for we had but just arrived in Arles, and there was feasting and dancing to which she had looked forward with delight. She obeyed me without question, and seeing that I was in one of my worst moods kept silence as we sped homeward. The moon shone fitfully through scudding clouds, for a storm was gathering, and the winds sweeping through the gorges drove the snow before them down the staircase of lesser ranges by which the Alps step to the sea. Our road was flanked by precipices and

furrowed by drifts. Had I not known every turn around the icy crags, every bridge across the chasms, where to look for avalanches, where the bears made their dens, and where bandits might fall upon us, it would have been certain death to have attempted that drive of twelve miles on such a night. But the fury within me found a mad delight in the peril without, and I cursed my horses as I lashed them to their utmost speed.

We had passed the town of Les Baux and were crossing the desolate boulder-strewn plain of La Crau. Already the windows of my castle gleamed red above us, when to the dangers I have named was added a new terror. Skulking behind the rocks were wolves, who came out into the moonlight after we had passed and watched us. The frightened horses galloped over the uneven ground, and my wife gave a cry as looking back she saw that the wolves were following. Three, four, six, eight—the pack grew in number as they gained upon us. Some evil spirit must have entered into me, for I taunted Barrale with her fear.

"Are Pierre Vidal's boasts true then," I asked, "since you are so afraid to die?"

"What hath he boasted?" she cried; and

then before I could answer—"Naught, for he hath naught to boast, and he is a true man, my Ugo."

"Call me not yours," I said, "for if after you hear how he has made merry with our honour you still name him true man I will throw you to those wolves," and I told her what I had heard and how I had resolved upon his death.

"You are mad," she persisted; "the man who told you this slander lied, for Pierre is true."

"True lover," I thought was what she meant, and I caught her by the arm shouting, "Out you go, to the wolves!"

"So be it," she answered, with her set face close to mine, "for I would rather trust their mercy than yours."

Then an astounding thing happened. A bolt of lightning—for so I deemed it—fell from the sky, and not my wife but I was flung, stunned and blinded, into the snow. Painfully I raised myself, but not to my full height, for paralysis kept me upon my knees. I fancied at first that my back had been broken, but as I dragged myself as best I could along the road I discovered that the injury was only a strange cramping of the

muscles of my legs and that I suffered no pain.

The sleigh was still in sight. My wife had gained possession of the reins and had mastered the horses. They were floundering with such difficulty through the drifts that I soon overtook them, but at my approach they took new alarm, and when I sprang for the reins Barrale lashed at me desperately with the heavy whip. Persisting in my efforts and attempting to climb into the sleigh I saw something which frightened me more than the sharp stiletto with which she slashed at my clutching fingers.

For there, across her feet, with white, upturned face, lay the contorted body of a man. My own dead body I could have sworn, but that I felt myself keenly alive as I panted after them.

Whose corpse could it be if not mine, and how did it happen that the face bore features which I recognised as my own, although convulsed by a malignant sneer?

I dismissed the vision as a trick of my imagination and bounded on, for I realised that I must gain my castle before I should be overtaken by the wolves.

My wife had but driven within the court

when I rang, but the porter who opened at my summons instantly let fall the portcullis in his affright.

"There is a great grey wolf on the drawbridge," I heard him cry, and the word went echoing through the castle, "Wolf! wolf!"

My great deer-hound sprang from his kennel the hackles bristling on his spine, while he strained at his chain and gave tongue savagely.

I looked about me—there was no living creature in front of the castle save myself. "Down," I shouted; "Ho! there, Hubert, haul up the portcullis. It is I, your master."

But my voice sounded hoarse and unfamiliar even to my own ears, a crossbow projected from a *meurtrière* and its bolt hurtled by me. The dog loved me well, why had he not recognised me? And why, good marksman as Hubert was, had he missed me at such easy range?

"It must be Barrale who set them upon me," I thought, and at that instant a wicket opened high in the wall and I heard her voice. "It is a *loup-garou*," she cried, "and only an arrow dipped in holy water can pierce his hide. See, though I hacked them with my knife, his paws are uninjured!"

With that I looked at my hands. God help me! they were hands no longer, but a beast's paws with ugly claws protruding from the fur. The moon shone clear, and I could see my shadow upon the snow. It was plainly that of a wolf. The lightning-stroke had fallen not aimlessly. I was a man no longer, for my soul in its bestial rage had been withdrawn from my human body and given to a beast.

I stormed at first against my punishment, but as relentless nights and days succeeded one another, I rebelled no more, and resigned myself to my fate. I even grew to take delight in being the strongest and boldest wolf in the pack. Hunting had been my passion, and I now indulged it to the full. The other wolves followed me as their leader, and no deer were too swift or sheep dogs too savage to be overcome. Not only the flocks and herds suffered, but belated travellers were waylaid in the forest, and only a few cleanly gnawed bones and bloody trampled snow told of the tragedy. It is true that I took no part in these attacks. The thought of devouring human flesh was abhorrent to me, and I felt mortal enmity but for one man. But I made no effort to restrain the wolfish appetites of my

retainers, and heard with a callous heart the distant cries of many an unfortunate wretch.

There was in the pack a white wolf called "Lure," of the cunning and ferocity of a fiend, for such in truth he was. He told me that even as a man he had tempted me and that he had followed me into this antechamber of hell of his own free will, and challenged me to name another who for the sake of any ancient friendship would have done so much. My wife's name sprang to my lips, but the thought of Vidal kept me silent.

Once not even death could have separated us, for neither could have lived without the other, but now she was doubtless rejoicing in her liberty. So I listened consentingly to the subtle arguments with which Lure encouraged the one vestige of humanity which I still retained,—my persistent desire for revenge.

Since I was no longer a man, he persuaded me, I could not be judged by a man's code of morals, with any more justice than I could be blamed that I now coursed my game on all fours and ate my meat uncooked.

God Himself, who had imposed upon me the form and nature of a savage animal, must with it have given me warrant for acting according to brutish instincts.

If ever Pierre Vidal fell into my power I might tear him limb from limb, and who could impeach the soul or the memory of Ugo des Baux, who died on that night when my spirit passed into the wolf, and whose career up to that time had been one of honour?

I accepted his sophisms with avidity, and patrolled with my pack the road to Arles, athirst to fasten my fangs on Vidal's white throat. It was long before he came to Les Baux, but at length fate gave me my opportunity. It was Lure who told me that he had slipped my vigilance and had gone to my castle mounted on a fine horse and tricked out in all the finery which he so loved to sport. With eagerness I lay in wait for his return, but the instant that I caught a glimpse of his face I saw it so full of mortification and anger that I knew that whatever might have been the quest upon which he came, it had not prospered.

"Curse her for a jilt!" he cried, as he passed me, crouching, unseen, "a jilt, a jilt!"

And my heart leaped so tumultuously as I thought that he had come to woo my widow, and that Barrale had sent him about his business, that I sprang in a half-hearted way, so missing my aim, and fixing my teeth

in his boot was beaten off with no taste of blood in my hot throat.

But though I knew that Barrale had no love for him, neither had I pity, for my rage grew that he should have maligned her and have been the cause of our quarrel and of my humiliation. Therefore as, following at a distance, I saw him enter the gates of the Abbey of Montmajour, "Here," said I, "I will sit me down, nor will I quit the spot until I have had my will."

Lure came to me as I stood sentinel, bringing to mind all the delights that I had lost, even the beauty and sweetness of my dear lady, until my heart was like to burst with thwarted desire, and as if this were not enough, he had another whip of the furies with which to lash me.

"It is time that you knew," said he, "what Vidal has hitherto concealed from you, that his father was one of that gang of torturers and murderers by whom your father was done to death. If the thought that Vidal pretends to the love of your wife is not enough to rouse you, know that it is a filial duty to avenge a father's murder."

I know not whether Lure spoke the truth, for fiends lie—'t is enough that I believed it

advanced until he was within hearing of the pack, which squatted in a semicircle; and began his discourse in those tones of penetrating sweetness which gave him such instant power over his human audiences.

"My brave brothers of the wilderness," he said, "we have more in common than ye perhaps recognise. Long have I marvelled at your valour, and at your endurance of cold and of hunger, of weariness and of all other privations. With what resignation ye content yourselves for habitation with a rocky cave as austere as the cell of some holy anchorite. Ye know naught of the sinful luxuries of men, but practise the vow of poverty as strictly as professed monks, wandering in your grey robes without purse or scrip, barefooted, over the frozen earth, seeking your sustenance like humble mendicants, or if you snatch it like bandits, your sin is less than theirs, since it is one of ignorance. Of all our graver crimes—blasphemy, idolatry, heresy, slander, lying, foul speaking, cowardice, and treachery—ye are guiltless, and in your one fault, cruelty, ye are far surpassed by man.

"My brother wolves, every living creature must seek its meat from God. I blame you not that ye eat not grass like the ox, since

this is not your nature; but I come to bid you refrain from the flesh of men. Let your human brethren come and go in safety, and ye shall be fed from their superfluity. On such of you as will accept this compact I will bestow the blessed rosary. Wear it about your necks, and come without misgiving to the refectory of this Abbey and into the markets of Les Baux; no one shall do you harm, and flesh shall be given you until such time as a human being is again slain by one of your number."

Francis held his rosaries aloft, but no wolf stirred to accept the pledge and safeguard. In my heart alone a dumb longing swelled intolerably, and grovelling to the ground I crept to his feet.

The future saint laid his hand upon my head, and I could see that a great pity for my misery stirred his soul.

"My brother," he said, as he placed the rosary about my neck, "our knowledge is the measure of our guilt. Whatsoever sins thou mayest in thy ignorance have committed—they are not imputed unto thee. Now that thou hast been enlightened, go and sin no more."

But this was not the boon which I desired.

Where were the wonder-working drops which would restore me to my lost estate?

"I sinned against light," I groaned, "but may not even such sin be forgiven? Impose any penance, but finally give me again the semblance of a man."

Francis had turned to go, but my moans touched his heart, though he could not understand them.

"My unhappy brother," he said gently, "I know not what thy trouble may be, but I shall pray for thee. I charge thee to watch over this brotherhood, protecting all who dwell beneath their roof from violence, and in as thou shewest mercy O wolf, shall mercy be shewn to thee."

So speaking and having made the sign of the cross over me he departed.

Lure also left me, uttering a demoniac howl, and though there was no change in my outward semblance there came over me such peace and joy as I had not felt since the night of my transformation, for I comprehended dumbly that for even me there was hope. Therefore I set myself patiently to the task which Francis had imposed, becoming the watch-dog of the Monastery and walk-

SAINT FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE WOLVES.
From the painting by Luc Olivier Merson

ing beside the monks when they issued from the Abbey on their errands of necessity or mercy. Thus I became known at Les Baux as the Wolf of St. Francis, and my meat was given me even as the holy man had promised.

And once it so happened, while I was waiting patiently for it at the door of a flesher, there came a woman with a beautiful little girl about five years of age. They had heard of me, for the child came at once and fondled and caressed me, the woman not forbidding. The touch of the child's fingers thrilled me.

"Good wolf, dear wolf," she said, "come with me to the château, and play with me, for it is very sad there, and my mamma does naught but weep and pray."

"And does your mistress still persist in her strange infatuation?" asked the flesher.

"That she does," replied the woman, "for though gallants in plenty come to woo she will see no one, but him whom she hides within her bower, unworthy though he is of her great love. Moreover, though she will not admit it, the end is drawing near. The malady with which he is afflicted, which the leeches call lycanthropia (Note B), increases. After each paroxysm he grows weaker, and she has gone to the Abbey of Montmajour to beg the

blessed Francis to return with her and restore him to health. He has performed such miracles, they say, but will he even at her prayer lengthen the life of one of whom the world were well rid?"

Then I comprehended that the woman was not the child's mother but her nurse, and that the little maid was my own daughter, a babe in the cradle when last I saw her, and such love and longing constrained me that I followed her obediently. But what I should find and what I should do when I crossed the threshold of my home I knew not, for my mind misgave me.

As we approached the castle I could see the lighted casement of my chamber, and presently the form of my wife silhouetted darkly against its brightness. It passed swiftly, and I followed on unhindered over the drawbridge and up the staircase until I stood in the antechamber. The nurse lifted the tapestry for the child to pass, and I saw that my wife was not alone. The gentle Francis was by her side, and they both bent over a man who lay as though asleep upon the couch.

And even as I wondered who this man might be, Barrale kissed him, saying: "Waken,

THE WOLF OF SAINT FRANCIS.
From a painting by Luc Olivier Merson.

dearest, the blessed Francis has come to heal thee."

Then I knew him for my worst enemy, and I gloated that he was delivered into my power. What should hinder me from rending him as he lay helpless? But as I crouched to spring the voice of Francis enthralled me again with its all-compelling charm, as he chanted his wondrous canticle:

"Praised be Thou, O my Lord, of them that do show
Forgiveness unto others for love of Thee, and do endure
Tribulation. Yea, blessed be they that
Do endure in peace, for of Thee, O Thou most Highest,
Shall they be crowned?"

"Dost thou forgive?" he asked of the dying man, but it seemed to me that the question was put to me also; and "Nay," I cried, "it is more than I can do and live; but I forgive and die."

And with the travail of that soul-birth my spirit was rent from the body of the beast and floated viewless above its carcass and into the adjoining room, where Francis chanted triumphantly:

"Praised be Thou, O my Lord of Sister Death, the

Death of the body, from whom no man living may
Escape—
And blessed be they that shall
Walk according to Thy most holy will, for
Unto them shall the second death do no hurt."

But even in that supreme moment, when it seemed to me that my soul, forgiven even as it forgave, was taking its flight from earth, I turned for a last farewell toward my wife, as she, with an exceeding bitter cry—"He is dying! O spare him to me, merciful God,"—flung herself beside the man upon the couch.

Marvelling greatly, I gazed upon him. It was indeed my worst enemy who lay agonising there, not Pierre Vidal, but my very self. The body of Ugo des Baux, from which my soul had been driven by the lightning's bolt, had lain bereft of reason and paralysed in living death for five years. And yet during all that time my Barrale had tended my poor semblance with unwavering devotion, hoping ever against hope that I would be given to her again, and swooning in anguish when freed from her long bondage.

When I understood this devotion the felicity of heaven had not so much attractiveness for me as the yearning face of the woman pressed against my inanimate one, and my

spirit in its answering longing leapt back into the cold clay, and looked through human eyes into hers.

This is my true confession made to Francis of Assisi, from whom I received blessed absolution; and written out and given sealed, as I have stated, into the hands of the Abbot of Montmajour what time I built him a strong tower and garrisoned it with archers, to take the place of the wolf guardian which the monks had lost, and to carry out the behest of Francis to keep watch and ward over the Abbey.

It was not hard for me to forgive Pierre Vidal, now that I knew that Barrale had never loved him, and whether his father were indeed concerned in the death of mine, or that were a figment of my disordered imagination, surely he were in no wise accountable. In his retreat at Montmajour he had resolved to become a crusader, and he sailed with Richard of the Lion Heart for the Holy Land, and we saw him no more.

I have told this story to no one else save my wife, for it is so marvellous that even she who knows full well that I am descended from the Babylonian king who suffered like penance

(Note C) cannot believe but that it is a hallucination which haunted me what time I lay insane in my own castle, and she has begged me to keep it close, lest doubt as to my sanity might still prevail. So difficult is it for those unillumined to believe the most perfectly attested miracle. But Francis found it not incredible, and he read to us (translating as he read into the vulgar tongue) the history of the metamorphosis of my far-away ancestor, how—

"He was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts. His dwelling was with the wild, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hairs were like eagle's feathers and his nails like claws."

Like him also when "mine understanding returned unto me I blessed the Most High whose works are truth and whose ways judgment, and they who walk in pride He is able to abase."

CHAPTER IV

THE VISION OF SAINT BERNARD

THIBAULT the Firebrand, doughty knight though he was, felt his knees knock together with sudden fear as he stood without the door of his wife's oratory and heard her passionate ravings as she knelt before the image of the Crucified.

Unscrupulous in most matters, his superstitious soul had a horror of blasphemy, and he had never imagined that such words could be uttered in the presence of God, by even the most presumptuous sinner; how much more incredible to hear them from the lips of the wife whom he had thought all piety and gentleness.

"Is it naught to Thee, O Christ!" she cried, "that this man tortures my heart, crucifies me with such agony as even Thou didst never suffer, in that I cannot bear it, that I cannot

bear it? Slay him, O righteous God, take him from the world ere his cruelty shall have wrought the perdition of my reason and of my soul."

Of whom was his wife speaking? Surely not of himself, for he had loved her beyond his own salvation. Before he had met her, under the preaching of the saintly Bernard, he had heard the divine call and had gone away almost persuaded to renounce the world for a religious life. Almost, and then he had seen her, and had answered the supreme question ringing in his ears: "What shall a man receive in exchange for his soul?" with the assertion: "I will give my soul for thy love, my Andouille."

They had wedded, and save when absent on some foray he had in his rough way devoted himself to her. Well she knew that she had no rival but his sword.

After all, he was not cut out for a monk but a soldier, and he had often wished that he might do feudal service with his sword to his liege lord Christ in the same way that he held himself ready to follow his king. Alas! Christ would not accept a divided heart; and he had turned a deaf ear to conscience, only pacing the floor at night when he thought

his wife asleep, and answering its monitions with fierce imprecations and reassertions that though hell were the penalty yet would he not give her up.

Why then was she not happy, and who was this man whom she besought God to destroy? He questioned his own conduct if in any way he could unwittingly have grieved her, and thought himself innocent. True, in common with most barons of the time, he had exacted severe feudal service from his serfs, and had been not over-careful for their well-being. What were the griefs and miseries of these swine to him? It vexed him that the gold he gave his lady for her personal pranking was so often spent for medicaments and clothing for these ungrateful clowns. The only rating he had ever given her was for cheapening her state in this way. He was not accounted hard-hearted or quarrelsome by his neighbours of like degree with himself. On the contrary, he loved to revel with them, and when they visited him not venison alone but costlier viands smoked for weeks upon his board, and the oldest wines of Champagne burst from their flasks like long imprisoned fountains, and danced and sang until the strongest heads reeled to the same giddy measure. What if

the jokes and tales grew too highly flavoured for my lady's ear? wine only made him more boisterously mirthful and uxorious. Even when deepest in his cups he never lifted his hand against her, but babbled of his devotion with maudlin tears when too drunk to swear. It was for her sake as much as his own, he told himself, that he had decided to serve the world instead of heaven, and she as well as he should have the best it had to offer.

So he had lived for ten years a life of grossest self-indulgence, with no ambition worthy of a man to tempt him from the quicksand of deterioration into which he had fallen. And all the while, in spite of Andouille's endeavours to rouse him from sloth, in spite of the pain in her pleading eyes, he had deluded himself with the idea that it was all for her sake and the world well lost. Then suddenly a change had been wrought in him, his better self awoke, and the life which he had hitherto led filled him with disgust. The change had been brought about by a number of causes converging and concentrating in the unexpected appearance upon the scene of the man who had once before so strongly influenced him, the all-persuasive Bernard.

The first circumstance to rouse Thibault

from his lethargy was the unpleasant realisation that his reckless prodigality had so depleted his fortune that some means must be immediately sought for repairing it. Only one expedient occurred to him. His castle was but a little distance from the great highway leading from Paris eastward to Lorraine, and just outside his hunting-park this road dipped into a lonely vale called the Valley of Wormwood. The valley broadened toward the east into marshy lands, whose pools the rising sun turned to blood, but the stream that spread itself here was confined higher up toward the west by a rocky gorge and brawled beneath a stone bridge defended by an ancient tower. This rude castle Thibault's kinsman, the great Count Hugh of Champagne, had in time past leased to a bandit, who exacted toll from rich merchants and other travellers. It was reputed that he even robbed pilgrims setting out on their journey to the Holy Land, and that those who threatened to complain to the king found graves without headstones in the red marsh. Hugh de Champagne had heard rumours of the doings of his tenant, and upon his death the Count left the domain to the Abbey of Citeaux, hoping thus to assoil his soul from any blame

for accepting as rental money wrongfully gained.

The Cistercians had not hitherto chosen to take possession of their legacy, and the bandit had offered Thibault, who was the Count's executor, a large sum for permission to remain undisturbed in the stronghold. This bribe Thibault had declined with a great show of indignation, visiting the tower with a troop of his men-at-arms and forcibly ejecting the brigand. At the same time he could not help noticing how admirably this toll-gate was situated for its purpose; and since then the idea had more than once crossed his mind that it would be easy to take the place of the unscrupulous tenant, and, with visor down and otherwise disguised, levy the same road-tariff, none suspecting that the tower had changed masters.

Being hard pressed by a Jew of Metz for the return of borrowed moneys, and learning that his creditor was on his way to Paris for the purchase of goods and must pass through the Valley of Wormwood, he at length succumbed to the temptation and sallied forth to waylay him.

It so happened that the robber, though dispossessed, had returned to his lair, and when

Thibault entered the valley he heard a great fracas and saw the bandits descending upon a convoy. It was not, as they supposed, the train of some rich merchant, but a party of twelve monks, who, with a few serfs leading mules laden with their poor effects, had been sent by the Abbot of Citeaux to take possession of their fief and to found a new monastery.

Fortunately for Thibault's reputation, a comprehension of the situation was vouchsafed him through the outcries of the fleeing servants, and he arrived upon the scene in the character of a rescuer instead of that of a brigand. For the rest, nothing could have induced him to lay hands on the property of the Church, and when he recognised Bernard at the head of the little party he thanked his guardian angel who had saved him from mortal sin. The bandit chief was speedily secured and a halter placed about his neck; but when Bernard interceded for the life of the wretch Thibault grudgingly placed the free end of the halter in the monk's hand. It irked him not to be allowed to show his zeal for holy Church by stringing up this miscreant whose crime, his own conscience told him, he had by the merest chance escaped.

The malefactor thus confided to the saint became one of the most devoted monks in the new Abbey of Clairvaux, which was founded in the bandit stronghold, and Bernard's coming proved a turning-point as well in the career of Thibault the Firebrand. Though he would not acknowledge the fact even to himself, he had not been happy in the life of sensuality in which he had steeped himself. He was weary of inglorious ease, of gluttony, and of drink, and satiated by the very monotony of Andouille's affection.

"God's death! it is the life of a stalled ox and not of a man," he had confided to a boon companion who was also sick of peace and spoiling for a good fight. "If only France were at war with some other nation, how gladly would I take the field!"

"There is need enough for our arms," replied the other, "for the Saracens pollute the Holy City and harass pilgrims while our swords rust in their scabbards, and all the kings of Christendom, and even the Pope as well, look on with indifference.

"The hearts of hundreds, nay thousands, of noble knights are swelling with indignation, but there will be no crusade, for only one man, the eloquent Bernard, can rouse the nations

from their apathy, and he is lost to the world, having declared that he will never again address an assembly outside his own priory of Clairvaux."

Andouille had overheard this conversation and others like it. The memory of the first glorious crusade led by Godfrey of Bouillon was fresh in all minds. Here was a cause worthy of high emprise, worthy of hardship and death. What calamity indeed was the risk of glorious death for Christ, compared with that death of the soul and the intellect into which her husband was daily slipping?

With all the zeal of an ardent believer and all the love of an anxious wife she endeavoured to persuade her husband to join the little band of knights who were labouring to fan the flame of a crusade. What, she asked herself, could temporary absence do but make more intense the rapture of their reunion? Her husband was sick of her continual coddling. He would appreciate more her loving *devoir* after a season of hardship.

She believed that the crusade could be put on foot without the agency of Bernard, whose pitiless aceticism had gained for him the name of "*Le terreur des mères et des jeunes femmes.*"

They had reason to fear him, all loving women, for his irresistible influence had even been pitted against all that they held dearest, luring their sons and lovers from their homes to the cloister, poisoning their hearts with the terrible virus of his sublime fanaticism. And now by a strange dispensation of Providence her enemy had come to her door. Bernard had established himself in the robber castle, converting it into a priory, and its marshy valley into fruitful fields.

Fortunately, as it seemed to Andouille, Bernard appeared to have renounced all interest in the outside world. As his priory required less of his attention, he spent hours and even days together in a lonely cave, absorbed in devotion, his soul almost ravished from his body in its contemplation of the bliss of heaven, to which he prayed that he might soon pass.

In vain Thibault strove to interest him in the crusade. He would neither listen to him nor touch the food which he brought, and Thibault returned to his castle after each visit more and more saddened.

"He will die," he said to his wife, "and the world has such need of him at this time. I told him this as the mouthpiece of my fellows.

We must have Bernard to organise us, to plead for the crusade with king and emperor, to awaken popular enthusiasm as no one else can. Without him there will be no crusade, and Jerusalem will be given over to the infidel."

The lady Andouille crept nearer to her husband and stroked his hand.

"If Bernard should undertake this task of organising the knights," she asked, "and should institute a new order of chivalry, are you certain that the rules with which he would bind you would be divinely inspired?"

"He would not accept the responsibility," Thibault replied, "unless he knew of a certainty that he was the mouthpiece of God."

"And if he believed that the rules of his own order were the only ones for knights as well as monks, and should impose upon you obedience and chastity, would you leave me for ever?"

"We know not that he would frame such a code," Thibault replied evasively. "But whatsoever he commands I will obey."

Andouille uttered a cry as one suddenly stabbed. "Nay, you *do* know that he would demand such renunciation, and you love me no longer." She flung her arms about her

husband's neck, but he put her from him, saying coldly:

"I would have become a monk but for you. Would you have me lose my soul utterly by refusing Christ this tardy service?"

"Nay," she replied. "Lay your cause before God, as I also will lay mine, and we will leave the result in His hands."

Thibault had not been surprised that her woman's heart had rebelled at first at the thought of separation for the rest of their lives, but he had no idea of the intensity of her love until at the door of his wife's oratory he had overheard her wild weeping and wilder prayer:

"O righteous God, take this man out of the world before he has desolated it. Remove him to the heaven which he is so impatient to enter. In Thy hands are life and death. Manifest thy judgments now, O great just God. Is it right that this man should in Thy name commit this monstrous crime? Strike him suddenly ere he has time to laden his soul with more suffering of the innocent."

There was silence for a brief space as though the agonised suppliant were awaiting an answer. Then she seemed to have heard it through some inner sense, for, awed and stricken with surprise, she murmured: "Yea,

Lord, I know Thou workest through human hands; but how can I be certain of Thy will?"

Again there was silence, then broken cries of remonstrance. "Nay, Lord, work through another This task is too great for me. I cannot do it."

Thibault knew now that the man whom she so hated was Bernard. Could it be possible that her jealous adoration of her husband had so warped her reason that in her fear of losing him through Bernard's agency a murderous fanaticism had taken possession of her mind, and she believed that she had divine permission to compass the monk's death?

He regarded her with keen anxiety when she rejoined him, but she greeted him as tranquilly as though she had but come from singing her babe to rest instead of from one of those fierce agonies in which souls are born or die.

"Thibault," she said, "if thou art so sure of the will of God, why dost thou not do it?"

"What do you mean?" he stammered.

"Have out a litter," she replied, "and bring Bernard hither. I myself will nurse him and prepare with mine own hands the food which his weakness demands."

But Thibault was not reassured. What might not his wife be tempted to do or to leave undone to turn the crisis toward death when she had shown so plainly in which direction she wished the pendulum of fate to swing?

He had already written for a learned physician who could care for Bernard in his own priory, but would the enthusiast submit himself to a medical practitioner?

Distracted by these questions he slept but little, until toward dawn, when his lady gave him a sleeping potion which did its work so thoroughly that it was high noon when he awaked.

His first act after dressing was to seek the key of the postern gate leading into the Vale of Wormwood, but it was not in its accustomed place. He called his wife, but before he could question her he saw the key on her chatelaine. She changed colour as she handed it to him, admitting that she had taken it; having made a bowl of broth which she was about to send to Bernard.

"It was a good thought," he said, regarding her keenly. "Give me the broth, and I will be your messenger."

Her eyes fell, but she brought him the dish.

A turmoil of apprehension rushed like a whirlwind through his brain as he carried it out of the castle. His favourite hound leapt upon him as he entered the bailey, and he set the dish on the ground before it. Then, ashamed of his suspicions, or fearing to see them realised, he kicked the dog away, emptied the broth into the moat, and returned to the kitchen, telling the cook that he had stumbled and spilled the soup intended for Bernard. She refilled the tureen from the kettle in which his own breakfast was simmering, and he hurried to the hermitage, distracted by fears which he would not own.

To his great surprise he found Bernard in an entirely different frame of mind.

The enthusiast lay upon his couch, weak but perfectly sane. The light of exaltation still shone in his eyes, but it was subdued by a loving interest in all that concerned his friend, his brethren, the Church, and even the world at large. In short, Bernard had come back to this present world and to humanity. He pressed Thibault's hand and thanked him gratefully for his solicitude.

"I have had a wonderful vision," he said. "The Madonna, in response to my unworthy invocation, has deigned to visit me. As I sat

bowed over my writing-table, transcribing the *City of God* of Saint Augustine, I was ware of a sudden radiance, and a perfume as from the gardens of the blessed. I did not look up at once, for I was smitten with awe, but presently a hand was laid upon the page on which I had been writing, a woman's hand, slender and white, and a voice of ineffable sweetness called me by name. 'Bernard, Bernard,' it said, 'the Master hath need of thee.'

"'In heaven?' I asked, for I had been looking for that call.

"'Nay, on earth,' replied the voice; and, looking up, I saw a face of such divine beauty that though my astonished lips framed the question, 'Who art thou?' I knew before I heard her answer, 'The handmaid of the Lord,' that I was in the presence of the Madonna.

"'What wouldst thou have me to do?' I asked again, 'for it shall be unto me according to thy word.'

"'Then rise, Bernard, rise and eat,' she commanded, placing before me a dish even such as thou bearest, and I obeyed her gentle mandate the while my glorious mistress discoursed further of the Lord's will to me-ward, telling me that I was called to rouse the na-

The Vision of Saint Bernard.

From the painting by Filippino Lippi.
(By permission of V. Jacquier.)

tions to a crusade for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre.

"'But I am too weak for such a task,' I objected.

"'And whose fault is it that thou art weak?' the vision asked. 'The spirit of God glows within thee like the flame in an alabaster lamp, but it feeds like that flame on physical nutriment. It flickers now, and will expire unless thou nourish thy lamp. God serves Himself in this world at the hands of human ministers. Such an one, a wise physician of the body, He sends to thee. Be not unbelieving or disobedient, but place thyself in all things under his commands until thy bodily health is mended. Then shall the flame of the spirit burn brightly and the task which God has for thee to do shall be fully revealed to thee.'"

"It is the most sensible of all thy visions," commented Thibault, "and I have the more credence that it came from heaven in that it is utterly unlike the dreams of a disordered imagination which thou hast hitherto recounted to me, nightmares of fiends hounding thee on to self-murder. There is foreknowledge of events in it too which thou couldst not have imagined of thyself, for thy friend

William of Champeaux is on the road charged by thy superior the Abbot of Citeaux to make thee sound in body and in mind. Eat, therefore, of this food, for it will give thee strength to wait his coming; it is a stew of venison which I myself killed but yesterday."

Bernard obeyed without scruple. "Even such," he said, "was the flavour of the heavenly manna brought me by the Blessed Virgin."

"How looked Our Lady?" asked Thibault.

"Exceeding meek and fair," Bernard replied. "A mist tempered the glory of her features which otherwise I doubtless would not have been able to look upon, but a golden radiance was diffused through this mist, giving it the semblance of a veil of saffron tissue. Even as she spoke to me, a light wind lifted this mist and wafted it through the open door of my cell over the tops of the trees and beyond my vision, and when I turned again toward the spot where my divine visitant had stood, she, too, had vanished from my sight."

Thibault doubted not the reality of Bernard's vision. The ascetic submitted with docility to the regimen prescribed by his physician, and his recovery seemed to all who had known his previous mental and physical

condition nothing short of miraculous. Hardly was his health established before he was called to attend the Council of Troyes, summoned to debate upon the formation of the new order of the Knights of the Temple. His capacity for organisation now showed itself as clearly as his persuasive eloquence, and at the unanimous request of the Council, as well as of the knights themselves, Bernard drafted the ordinances of the Templars. His heart was in the scheme, for his father had been a knight, and his boyish imagination had been fed with his tales of the exploits of Godfrey and of Tancred, told in all their freshness, for Bernard was but ten years of age when the knights returned from the victorious first crusade. Bernard believed that what had been so gallantly accomplished in his own lifetime could easily be re-enacted. With all his meekness there was something militant in his nature, a nature of many contrasts.

No record has been kept of the wonderful extemporaneous address which moved thousands at the Abbey of Vezelay, and caused King Louis VII. and Queen Eleanor to receive the cross at his hands; or of hundreds of other sermons with which he convinced countless multitudes, as he went about through

France and England, Germany and Italy, crying "God wills it," till, as Bernard himself wrote, "the cities and castles were deserted, and wives were made widows."

Stern as the rule of Saint Benedict were the regulations which he imposed upon the Templars.

But harder than poverty, than abject obedience, than privation, peril, and exile, was that mandate which tore husband from wife and from the prattling voices of little children, making the love of man and woman and the pride and joy of fatherhood deadly sins.

Bernard forbade the Templars to hold converse even with devout women, "because the Ancient Enemy hath by female society withdrawn many from the right path to Paradise."

And in the last chapter of his ordinances he prohibited them from offering even to their sisters and their mothers the kiss of affection, "*ut omnium mulierum fugiantur oscula.*"

When Thibault read these rules his heart failed him, and he placed the paper in his wife's hands. "It shall be as thou wilt, Andouille. Even now it is not too late. Speak the word, and the knights shall go forth without me."

"You love me then?" she cried, all her face transformed with sudden joy.

"As I have always done, my Andouille. You shall choose for us, and if you will—God's death! what do I care for my soul?—all things shall be as they were." He held her close, and the intensity of his passion frightened her.

"Nay, not as they were, not as they were. *I* care for your soul, O my beloved. Bernard must know best, and I give you to God."

Man-like he was not satisfied. "Is it so easy then to give me up?" he asked. "There was a time when my love was more to you than salvation. Let us speak truth to one another now since these be last words. I heard you, Andouille, praying God to take Bernard from the world, and you babbled something of being God's instrument. Truly I thought that love of me was tempting you to crime. What miracle has changed you? For you do not love me as then you did."

"Not as then, but more. Suddenly, in the hour of which you speak, God let me see things for one moment clearly. I saw you through wine and wassail, and alas, through your passion for my poor beauty, growing daily more into the likeness of the beasts

which perish, your brain sodden, your conscience dulled, willing, in order to deck me with gewgaws, to oppress your people, and even to lead them to robbery. I saw that Bernard had come as God's angel, that none but he could save you, or the vast multitude of other knights who were leading the same lives; and in that hour when I gave you up, and in this when I confirm the gift, I love you more than at my bridal, for I love your soul. Instead of being a menace to the life and work of Bernard I have saved both, though in so doing I knew what would come to pass. You have bidden me choose for us both, but you could not have loved me as you do now had I made the baser choice."

"It is a miracle," he said, "such as the appearance of the Madonna to Bernard: for, unless she moved you, Andouille, you could not speak as you do now, nor could I bear it."

And a sublime exaltation bore her up, for she heard within her heart a still, small voice saying: "Though other miracles were none, this of turning a sinner into a saint has been wrought before thine eyes, and partly by thy means,—and this miracle shall not pass away."

Thibault thought that he understood his wife (but how can a man fully understand a

woman's devotion?). And he rode away, knowing that he should see his lady's face no more in this world. As he followed the woodland path up the valley of Clairvaux to bid Bernard farewell, he saw fluttering from the topmost branch of a tree which sheltered the cave which the monk had made his hermitage a filmy veil of faded saffron gauze. He disengaged it with his lance, and recognising the initial A, wrought in the border not with silk but with a thread of golden hair, he covered it with kisses and wound it about his helm. It caught Bernard's attention, for the light shone through it and gave it the appearance of an aureole.

"God gives thee the sign of sainthood, my son," said the mystic. "Either my eyes deceive me or I see above thy head a wreath of glorious effulgence such as streamed from Our Lady's features when she granted me the vision which I hold as seal and warrant of my mission. Go and bear thyself valiantly, for the favour of God is with thee."

And Thibault received his blessing kneeling. Nor told he the holy man that the shimmering radiance was his wife's veil, nor where he had found it.

CHAPTER V

THE TAPESTRIES OF BOURGANEUF

THE old Hospitaller writes, A.D. 1510:

None will think it strange that the old Commandery of Knights Hospitallers at Bourganeuf should boast as superb a series of tapestries as ever decked royal palace or grand cathedral, for the manufactory of Aubusson is close at hand, a manufactory owned by the great man who was the honoured head of our Order and who dearly loved its citadel at Bourganeuf.

But the uninstructed observer who gazes at them in future days may well marvel at the subjects chosen for these beautiful hangings, for certes they are little suited to a religious house. They depict no history of holy writ nor legend of saints, no, nor the glorious exploits of the great Pierre d'Aubusson, nor of the Knights Hospitallers whom he led in so many

TOMB OF PHILIPPE POT.
Formerly at the Abbey of Citeaux, now in the Louvre.

great actions. They show only a sweet-faced lady surrounded by flowers and beasties of the wood. I am an old man now, and when I am gone there will be no one who can tell the story aright, and so I have thought best to write it out lest fabrications arise discreditable alike to our house and to the subject of these pictures.

Without doubt she was an enchantress, the blond Agnes of Bourganeuf, for not only did all men who knew her become captive to her will, but animals, who are less susceptible than men to the charm of beauty, would follow her fascinated and forget while in her presence their savage instincts to prey upon one another.

Her falcon would eat tamely from her hand, utterly disregarding the wild creatures, shy partridges, and little bunny rabbits which stole from their hidden haunts to frisk about her. Her mischievous monkey would cease his pranks at a single rebuking word, and her two pet dogs, who were consumed with jealousy over her favours, and who quarrelled when out of her sight, would each submit in her presence, though with piteous whines, to seeing the other fondled.

Of these dogs, Flocon de Neige, the Maltese

terrier, had been brought her by the noble Pierre d'Aubusson, Grand Master of the Chevaliers Hospitallers de St. Jean de Jerusalem, on his last return to his native land. The Grand Master remembered her as a pretty child, fond of pets, and he was surprised to find her a beautiful girl of eighteen. She cared none the less for the pretty dog because she had grown up to woman's estate, and she lavished the most affectionate care on the stupid, selfish, and greedy creature, combing its tangled mop of silky, white hair away from its weeping eyes, and allowing it to couch on the most luxurious of cushions and even on the train of her velvet robe.

Her other favourite dog was a mouse-coloured Persian greyhound, only eighteen inches high, a shivering, fragile creature not made to support our vigorous climate, and cowardly as well as delicate, but very intelligent and devoted, so that while it trembled in every limb it would still bark violently whenever an intruder appeared whom he thought a menace to his mistress. This dog's name was Saladin, and he wore a golden collar set with moonstones. He had been given to the fair Agnes by the unfortunate Prince Zizim—but of him more hereafter; suffice it now to say

that the two dogs divided her affection as their donors did her admiration and sympathy.

It was Pierre d'Aubusson whom she and I most admired of any living human being, and well we might, for never hero of antiquity or of troubadour's ballad was more courageous and heroic, no, nor saint nor martyr more impassioned in his worship of his Lord. His ancestral castle overhung the Creuse, not far from Bourganeuf, but nearer the city of Aubusson, of which his family had long been vicomtes. He was Duc de la Feuillade also, and *Senechal de la haute et basse Marche*, but he early gave up these worldly honours to become a Knight Hospitaller to fight the Mussulmans, who at this time were in possession of Jerusalem and had recently taken Constantinople and destroyed the Byzantine Empire, and who now, under Mohammed II., threatened to stable their horses in the Vatican.

Aubusson rose rapidly and was soon appointed Grand Prior of Auvergne (his native province). This was the division of the Order which had its Commandery at Bourganeuf and made him my superior; for I was serving my novitiate, hoping some day to be a Knight, but now employed in the scriptorium, as I was clever with pen and pencil.

Our Grand Prior was not often with us; he was ever at the front when danger called, and, as I have said, these were troublous times. Whenever he made one of his rare visits to his Commandery he rode through the adjacent park to the château of his old friend the Vicomte de Montchenu, the father of the little Agnes, for it pleased him to see the child at play with her pets, and she loved to hear his stories of adventure in the far East. All of her dolls were clothed in mail, and wore the maltese cross upon their surcoats. Her favourite bower was named Jerusalem, and all evil beasts,—wolves, wild boars, serpents, and weasels,—were Turks.

When d'Aubusson was not with us his headquarters were at Rhodes, the outpost of Christianity, the sentinel island in the path of the conquering Turk. It was a critical time for our religion. Mohammed swept on victorious. Greece, Servia, Wallachia, and the Adriatic Islands surrendered to him. Before Rhodes alone he hesitated for a time, for d'Aubusson, who had now become Grand Master of his Order, not only held the citadel but swept the Mediterranean with his galleys, capturing and sinking Turkish vessels. Mohammed saw that it was a personal duel, and

either he or the Grand Master must acknowledge himself conquered. That nest of hornets, Rhodes, must be burned out at any cost, and in May, 1480, a Turkish army of one hundred thousand men began its siege. Two desperate assaults were made, during which the Grand Master received five wounds, but the infidels were obliged at last to abandon the siege, leaving nine thousand dead before the gates.

Mohammed understood that he had received his "Thus far and no farther," and his death, which occurred in less than a year, was hastened by his impotent rage.

Pierre d'Aubusson received the congratulations of all Christendom, and was named by the Pope the Defender of Christianity and the Buckler of the Church.

It was now that he returned as a conquering hero for his last visit to his home and to the Commandery of Auvergne, and brought Agnes her lap-dog. He had forgotten how the passage of a few years can change a child to a woman, and the great warrior stood abashed before the beautiful girl. But she received his gift with charming grace and named the bundle of soft, white hair Flocon de Neige, and Flocon and the Grand Master, looking into

her gentle eyes, were both from that moment her devoted slaves.

The Grand Master remained longer at Bourganeuf than on any previous visit. He had much to do, for he was planning wise ordinances to improve the organisation of the Hospitallers, its exterior diplomacy, its internal rule—the securing of great men for its officers and the strengthening of its finances and its power. This was but the means for a grand end, which he had had at heart all his life, the stirring up of the European powers to another crusade for the rescue to the Holy Sepulchre.

He was in correspondence with the German Emperor, with the Pope, with the King of Hungary, and with the King of England. His absorbing dream, for which he had laboured night and day, was a great Christian League to rid the Holy Land of the Mussulman. But now even as he explained it to the fair Agnes and her sensitive mind was thrilled by his high ambition, this dream became vague and shadowy, and all his plans seemed chimerical and the guerdon not worth the labour; so potent even over a man past the prime of life is the fascination of a woman's face. So their mutual influence interacted

each upon the other, and while Agnes lived in phantasy, longing ever to help him organise the crusade, in proportion as her enthusiasm kindled his own waned, and he even contemplated in his secret heart retiring from his Order and petitioning the Pope to release him from his vow of celibacy. He made restorations in his ancient castle, long uninhabited, and ordered a new set of tapestries made for its great hall at the manufactory of Aubusson. This manufactory had been founded years before by a company of artisans attracted to Aubusson by the woollen-yarn industry, for half the men of Auvergne were shepherds, and their wives spun the wool which was dyed in Aubusson. The dyers were descendants of certain Saracens who took refuge in these rocky gorges after their rout by Charles Martel at the battle of Tours, and were possessed of a valuable secret, that of producing the Tyrian purple and other colours known only to the rug-makers of the Orient.

Pierre d'Aubusson interested himself in the tapestry works of his native town and detailed me, who had hitherto devoted myself to the illumination of missals, to make the designs for the tapestries. Instead of desiring me to celebrate his own glorious deeds at Rhodes

he bade me depict the fair Agnes engaged in her favourite occupations, playing the organ, training her falcon, walking in the park, and surrounded always by her little friends the beasties of the wood.

It was necessary in order that I should have opportunity to study my subject, that Agnes should sit for my sketches, but she had no voice in gainsaying or permitting, for d'Aubusson had her father's consent. He was a shrewd man who divined what thoughts were fermenting in the mind of the Grand Master.

He gave me very few limitations or suggestions other than that each of the tapestries should display, as heraldic supporters, his own emblem, a *buisson*, or thicket of thorny holly, and a blossoming orange tree typical of the fair Agnes, connected by his own motto, "*Inter spinas floret*" ("I blossom among thorns"). The naturalistic picture of Agnes and her pets was also in each case to be framed by heraldic beasts from their respective crests used as supporters—his great lion and her white unicorn, a fabulous beast, the emblem of purity.

"These creatures shall hold standards," he explained, "from which shall float long banderoles to be embroidered after the tapestries

are finished with whatever device the fair Agnes shall herself designate, for, though she is ignorant of my intention, I plan that the tapestries shall be my gift to her upon her wedding day."

It was while the private affairs of d'Aubusson were in this state, that an event occurred at Rhodes which made necessary the presence of the Grand Master, and he most unwillingly hastened away. The Sultan Mohammed in dying had left his kingdom divided by the rival pretensions of his two sons, Bajazet and Djim, or as our French chronicles designate the younger, Zizim.

Bajazet had the support of the Janizaries, and had been acknowledged Sultan at Constantinople, but Zizim, who was the son of an ambitious Turcoman Princess, gathered together the wild hordes of Asia and attacked his brother in several unsuccessful battles. After many hairbreadth escapes he had actually sought an asylum at Rhodes—promising the Hospitallers many favours, such as permission of pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the release of any of their Order who were prisoners, if they would sustain his cause.

Pierre d'Aubusson saw at once what a valuable ally Zizim might be made, and only

paused at Rome for a conference with the Pope in regard to his cherished plan of a crusade, in his hurried return to Rhodes. This conference, however, opened his eyes to the real character of Alexander Borgia, than whom no greater monster of iniquity ever lived. The Pope admitted that he was in correspondence with Bajazet, who was willing to pay an immense annual stipend if he would either kill his brother Zizim or keep him out of the Orient.

The scheme of the Universal League of all Christendom for the conducting of a crusade did not in the least appeal to the Pope, and d'Aubusson saw that he could count on no encouragement from him. He also understood that His Holiness (in this case most falsely so named) would, if possible, compass the death of poor Zizim, and all the Grand Master's instincts of honour and hospitality bade him protect the guest who had trusted himself in his power.

At Rhodes he found the young Mohammedan Prince full of delusions of what he might accomplish if only the Chevaliers of the Hospital would aid him, but not yet so crushed in spirit as to be willing to grant what d'Aubusson demanded—the withdrawal of all

Mohammedans and the re-establishment of a Christian kingdom in Jerusalem. Anything but that. Pilgrims might safely go and come and visit the Holy Sepulchre, but d'Aubusson must understand that Jerusalem was also to the Mohammedan a sacred city, that the Mosque of Omar, erected on the site of Solomon's Temple, was for them a shrine of pilgrimage second only to Mecca. If the Hospitallers would help him, well and good. If not, he demanded haughtily to be escorted to the King of Hungary, who would be glad of a league with the Turcomans to keep the Ottoman Turks from encroaching on his empire.

While these interviews were being held with Zizim, d'Aubusson received a communication from the Pope informing him that Bajazet was about to collect all his forces and lay siege to Rhodes to obtain possession of his brother, and that the Pope, desirous of preserving peace and not meddling with quarrels which did not concern him, commanded the Grand Master to deliver over Zizim to his brother's emissaries.

D'Aubusson saw that Bajazet had finally offered Borgia a sufficient bribe, and that between the two he could no longer keep Zizim in safety at Rhodes. He accordingly

resolved to despatch him to a place of safety at a sufficient distance from both Bajazet and the Pope, the Commandery of Auvergne, where, under his trusty Knights Hospitallers, he could be guarded in secret until he could bring him forward to aid in his cherished crusade.

In carrying out this scheme he employed more ruse than could have been anticipated from a man of his character. He feigned to accede to Zizim's request to be conducted to the King of Hungary, and sent him away under the escort of a troop of knights whose commander had sealed orders to take the way to Auvergne at the parting of the two routes. He was able to make the Pope believe for a time that Zizim had set out before the receipt of the papal orders but would undoubtedly be captured by his brother, and Bajazet himself sent an army to scour the roads to Hungary.

To Agnes he wrote of the coming of this prisoner guest, begging her to entertain him, for he had commanded that such liberties should be granted him as were compatible with his safe-keeping, and to persuade him if possible to consent to d'Aubusson's terms for his liberation.

PIERRE D'AUBUSSON.

THE TOWER OF ZIZIM.

No request could have given her greater pleasure. To aid d'Aubusson in organising a crusade had become the absorbing passion of her life. Her father presently visited Zizim and brought him an invitation to hunt in his park and to take refreshment at his castle. Certain knights were always told off to accompany him upon the hunt, to guard against his escape, but frequently they left him at the gate of the château where I was making the preparatory studies for the tapestry designs, and had also orders from the sub-prior to hold our prisoner in strict surveillance.

The Prince was young and strikingly handsome, of aristocratic manners and a cultivated mind. He spoke half a dozen languages fluently, and his French had only a slight accent which rendered it all the more fascinating. He was a poet not only in his native tongue, but could handle all the difficult metres of our troubadours, and was no mean musician as well.

He was impressed at once by the loveliness of the fair Agnes, but his dark eyes could shoot fire as well as languish, and his melancholy smile changed ever to a sinister sneer on the mention of the name of Pierre d'Aubusson. He believed the Grand Master to be

his mortal enemy, and could not forgive him that he had convoyed him through deception and force to this distant prison.

Agnes soon saw that it would be a difficult, perhaps an impossible, task to make him listen to any terms proposed by her friend. The more she praised d'Aubusson the more the prince sulked, for, while he was fast becoming enamoured of the Lady Agnes, the further he progressed upon that road, the more he hated the Grand Master, whom he fancied his rival.

He wrote triolets in her honour and sang them to his own accompaniment upon the lute, and was never tired of watching her feed and train her pets, giving her his own little greyhound, Saladin, which he had brought with him from Persia. I remember how beautifully she was gowned at their first meeting, for I painted the dress, a violet velvet embroidered in lighter shades of mauve and faced with cloth of gold. A heavy chain of gold was roped about her shoulders. The corsage of the dress was cut square, but her neck was covered with an elaborate necklace of amethysts, and she wore a band of amethysts coronet-wise about her hair from which depended a veil broidered with pearls.

Zizim saw that she was fond of gems, and he sent her an aigrette of white herons' plumes set with diamonds. The Lady Agnes said it was like a fountain, and she wore it at his next visit in her hair. I remember that on that day her dress was of green brocade with long velvet sleeves, and that she had her organ carried into the garden and played upon it like another Saint Cecilia, while her maid Amore worked the bellows. It was a charming spot, this garden, carpeted thick and soft with violets and pink-fingered daisies and primroses, and the birds sang in the holly thickets as though to drown her playing, and the little beasties crept nearer, fascinated by her singing.

The Prince's passion grew apace and there came a day when he could refuse her nothing. Jerusalem should acknowledge the claim of the King of France as its sovereign. If only Agnes would act as the French King's deputy in the Holy City and become Zizim's Queen Consort, his only wife and Sultana, he would submit to the Grand Master's hard conditions, and they would betake themselves to Jerusalem together, she to worship with her fellow-Christians at the Sepulchre, he at the Temple, the same God under different names.

To do her justice, Agnes had never thought of this outcome of her mediation as possible. Her nature was too pure for coquetry or passion, and all the love of which she was capable, a mystical, unworldly hero-worship, was given to d'Aubusson. She was frightened by the vehemence of her lover and for several days denied him her presence, while she pondered on the strangeness of the situation. Was she capable of making this sacrifice for d'Aubusson's sake? If he were only at Bourganeuf to give the decisive word in this great crisis of her life! And the word came in a letter brought from the Grand Master by a returning Hospitaller. It was a very surprising letter to the Lady Agnes, and it wrought a very different effect from that which the writer desired—for d'Aubusson wrote that in deep discouragement over the lack of interest of the Pope and of the King of France in the crusade, as well as on account of Zizim's obduracy in refusing to rally his followers in Palestine, he was on the point of giving up the enterprise, and of retiring a disappointed man from the Order of Knights Hospitallers. It remained for her to give the casting vote, for if she would accept the love of a man twice her own age, a love which had grown since her

"THE TONES OF THE ORGAN CHARMED THE BEASTIES OF THE WOOD."
By permission of Paul Robert.

earliest infancy, he would count all other glory well lost and would demand the absolution of his vow of celibacy and devote the remainder of his life to her, and her alone.

The fair Agnes was as startled by this revelation of the love of the Grand Master as she had been by that of the young Prince. She had not imagined her hero subject to the ordinary frailties of human nature, but believed him a demigod or saint. She now blamed herself for unwittingly tempting him from the path of duty, for lighting this passion, which had burned in concealment for so many years, and was now breaking out to wreck his high career and brand him in history as renegade to his vows.

It must not be. She would save him from this unworthy act, even at the expense of her own immolation. Her father had recently died, leaving her mistress of her own actions and of a considerable fortune. She immediately wrote d'Aubusson humbly but firmly declining his proposals, and informed him in the same letter of her betrothal to Prince Zizim, who had consented to his terms and would ally his adherents to the Hospitallers if permitted to return to the Holy Land. She added that she was about to pay a visit to the

French Court and hoped to influence the King to take the cross.

Good King René, titular King of Naples, Sicily, and Jerusalem, had recently died in Provence without male heirs, and the territorial rights of the House of Anjou had lapsed to the King of France, the young Charles VIII. He was a weak prince, but he had married Anne de Bretagne, a princess of great religious zeal as well as of ambition and spirit. The Lady Agnes was not over-sanguine in her hope that the Queen would influence her doting husband to undertake this quest, so much to his worldly as well as to his spiritual advantage.

The brave lady at once repaired to the Court at Amboise, making her camp each night in a magnificent pavilion of cloth of gold, which she had prepared for her wedding journey with the crusading army. Prince Zizim had sent her a casket of jewels as his betrothal gift, and she would have me paint her standing in the door of her pavilion receiving this offering. It was the last of my designs for the series of tapestries. The Grand Master had written her that he had all along purposed these tapestries as his wedding present to her; and I told her how he had

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The Gift of Jewels.

From the tapestry in the Cluny Museum.
(By permission of Paul Robert.)

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ordained that she should choose the device to be wrought upon the banners borne by the heraldic lion and unicorn. He had hoped, doubtless, that she would choose his "*buisson* of holly," but she elected instead for Zizim's coat of arms three golden crescents upon a vermilion field, and the tapestries were so woven at the Grand Master's manufactory at Aubusson. They were afterward hung upon the walls of her castle at Bourganeuf, where she lived for many years beloved and pitied by all and, dying, she left them to the Commandery, where doubtless in future days people will wonder at them if so be this writing is lost. She was never wedded, either to Pierre d'Aubusson or to Prince Zizim, for while she was at Amboise—where she succeeded in firing the enthusiasm of Anne de Bretagne and through her of King Charles—there arrived at Bourganeuf a legate from Pope Alexander Borgia who demanded of the sub-prior of the Commandery the person of Prince Zizim; and the sub-prior, having less reason than d'Aubusson to suspect the motives of His Holiness the Pope, or less courage to withstand his authority, delivered up that unfortunate young man, sending him to Rome under an escort of knights.

Great was the grief, consternation, and anger, not alone of the fair Agnes and of Pierre d'Aubusson, but of King Charles as well. That young monarch showed more spirit than had been expected of him, for he saw through the perfidy of the Pope, who was also in league with the Spanish pretender to the throne of Naples, and Charles straightway gathered together his army and cavalcaded through Italy, taking Naples very easily, and, from that city, dictating terms to the Holy Father.

Alexander dared not refuse the King's demand that Zizim should be given up to him, for had he done so Charles would not have hesitated to batter down the Vatican about his ears; but the Sultan Bajazet had promised to do the same thing if he set his brother at liberty, a sore dilemma one might have thought for the Pope, though His Holiness was clever enough to satisfy both the demands of the King of France and of the Sultan. Zizim was delivered to Charles, but in a dying condition. Those who carried his litter brought it to the pavilion of his loved lady, who had followed the King to Italy to meet her bridegroom. He laid his head upon her bosom and died—for the

stirrup-cup which the Pope had given had been charged with the poison of the Borgias, for which no leech in Christendom, no, nor the Borgias themselves, knew any remedy.

Of the Grand Master of our Order all the world knows how he persisted in his great enterprise, but failed through dissensions among his followers, and that he died at last at Rhodes—of a broken heart, as it was said, because of that failure, but only I who brought him the news that the Lady Agnes had died before him knew that he murmured:

"She will reconsider her choice when she chooses between us again—in Paradise."

(See Note A.)

CHAPTER VI

INTRA MUROS

OR, THE STORY OF A RED BOX

FOREWORD

STRONGEST of fortresses, most militant in aspect of all the cities of France, is the ancient town of Carcassonne.

Thanks to the restoration of Viollet le Duc, we see it to-day as it existed in mediæval times. Its very site, a promontory rising abruptly from the plain, is a natural stronghold, and its double row of encircling walls sentinelled by forty-eight towers give the impression that all the castles of France have made it their rendezvous, trundling into Languedoc and forming about the citadel in hollow square to guard it from attack. Only to treachery or starvation have those impregnable defences surrendered. Strong to

WALLS OF CARCASSONNE.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

repel and strong to hold, the massive walls could fold their citizens in safe embrace and could be cruel beyond belief, for they formed at their strongest angle the prisons of the Inquisition. Terrible tragedies have been enacted within their dungeons, crimes proved by the evidence of charred bones, heavy manacles, frightful oubliettes, and ghastly instruments of torture, and still more conclusively by the records of the tribunal itself. But of all the lingering agonies devised with such inhuman ingenuity there is none so fiendishly cruel as that hinted at by certain niches or alcoves in the thickness of these cyclopean walls, which tell of death by *emmurement* or walling up alive; and that this was a common punishment the number of these living tombs still testify.

But there were high lights in contrast to the darkest darks even in this gloomy picture. It has been the error of Protestants to believe that Roman Catholics universally endorsed the atrocities of the Inquisition, that heretics were invariably martyrs and Romanists always cruel. We cry too thoughtlessly:

"Oh, ay, the Monks, the Monks, they did the mischief;
Theirs all the grossness, all the superstition
Of a most gross and superstitious age.

May He be praised that sent the healthful tempest
And scattered all these pestilential vapours."

The true story, too little known, of Bernard Delicieux, a fervently orthodox Franciscan monk, who fought a fight, in which he had nothing to gain and all to lose, simply for the love of humanity, may convince us that in any contest the heroes are not all upon one side.

THE RED BOX

I

IN WHICH THE RED BOX MAKES ITS APPEARANCE

Early in the spring of the year 1302 an itinerant merchant in Oriental garb climbed with his pack-mules the steep streets of Albi. He had perfumes from Constantinople, with silks and goldsmithery of Italy, and other novelties to tempt the ladies, and trinkets not alone for them, but damascened weapons and tobacco for the men; and wise in his generation the pedlar made straight for the episcopal palace to tender the first choice of his wares to Monseigneur the Bishop of Albi.

This dignitary was notorious for his worldliness and love of luxury, but he was also miserly, and he haggled over the prices of the

commodities which his soul coveted. His eyes, half closed by heavy lids and protuberant cheeks, rested greedily on the contents of a red lacquer box,—a rope of pearls of unusual size and beauty.

"Your demands are most extortionate," said the Bishop, as his fingers caressed the lustrous, perfect spheres with more of devotion than they had ever touched the beads of a rosary. "None but a thievish Jew would ask so unchristian a price."

The Inquisitor for Languedoc, Foulques de Saint Georges, who was visiting Albi on business connected with the Holy Office, pricked his ear at the word Jew, and looked up from the lists of suspected persons which had been given him by the Bishop.

"I am no Hebrew," replied the merchant; "I hate the race of Israel as do the Christians, and I come to your country under the safeguard of your Pope."

"Let me see your credentials," commanded the Inquisitor, but he returned them with a scowl. "They are genuine, the man is duly accredited. I know the signature of the secretary of His Holiness."

"In that case you are free to go as you came," said the Bishop; "but you may carry

your pearls with you, and you need not return unless you abate your price."

"One moment, your Grace. The casket contains other small matters which may interest your lordship. See, it has a false bottom," and tossing the pearls carelessly aside, the merchant showed a layer of bon-bons fitted snugly beneath a slide.

"What child's play is this?" asked Foulques de Saint Georges, who had not returned to his study of the lists.

"They be tablets of bitter almonds," replied the pedlar steadily. "If your lordship will try the efficacy of but one, you will not complain of their insignificance, for the paralysis which will instantly seize your eloquency's tongue will in two minutes more still your beneficent heart."

The florid face of the Bishop turned to the colour of lead, but Foulques de Saint Georges exclaimed cheerfully, "Your little comfits interest me; what is their price apart from the bauble pearls?"

"They are inseparable, your worship. I cannot sell one without the other."

"Then get you gone," commanded the Bishop, "for I wish none of that deviltry."

The merchant bowed and took his leave.

"He will come again," chuckled the prelate, "for there is no one in Albi who will pay his price. What were you asking me when he interrupted us? The Garcias? Yes, they are very rich. There are but the two brothers, and they are my next neighbours. Their family have lived in yonder old palace of the Viscounts ever since the first of the name came hither from Spain. They are good Catholics, more is the pity, for their estate would enlarge my own very prettily.

"The elder, Raymond, I am to marry to-morrow, to the prettiest girl in all Albi. 'T is a sweet youth, Raymond, and a generous; he has sent me a noble wedding-fee. 'T is a pity that his brother Arnauld will not see the ceremony. He left Albi suddenly; some say he desired the girl himself, and could not bear to see her given to his brother, dearly though he loves him. 'Twaddle' did you say? Pray what do you know about it?"

"More than your Grace, apparently," Foulques replied. "I have private information from the King's confessor that Arnauld Garcia is in Paris intriguing with his Majesty for my ruin. See, I have marked his name with red. It matters not that he is not now in Albi. I will give him more rope that he

may hang himself. My friend writes that I must be wary, for he is thick with the King, who will protect him; but I can torture him through his brother, and drive him to commit rash acts, and meantime can assure your Grace that the finest pearls in Languedoc will be in your possession on the morrow."

Foulques de Saint Georges took a strange way to bring about his prediction, for he went immediately from the Bishop's residence to the inn, and finding there the Oriental, advised him to offer the red box and its contents to Raymond Garcia.

"The man is to be married to-morrow," he explained; "he is very rich, and insane with love; he will stick at no price."

The merchant returned shortly to thank him.

"Did you explain to him the properties of the spiced comfits?" asked Inquisitor Foulques, his eyes shining with satisfaction.

"Yes, your lordship, but the man would none of them, calling them devil's dirt."

"Then they are left on your hands?" mused the Inquisitor, his expression of pleasure changing to one of anger.

"Yes, your worship, unless you will take them."

"That I will, rascal; know you not that it is against the law to vend poisons thus? Give me the bon-bons and get you gone, thanking your stars that you have saved yourself so easily."

The pedlar made haste to follow the advice thus given; and now the Inquisitor retraced his steps to the Bishop's palace, for he was to dine with the prelate.

At table Foulques de Saint Georges casually mentioned his meeting with the merchant and reported the purchase of the pearls by the expectant bridegroom, but he said nothing of the little transaction concerning the comfits of bitter almonds.

The Bishop was inconsolable. "Why did I not buy those pearls!" he cried. "After all, the price was not extortionate."

"I see no occasion for such immoderate grief," replied the Inquisitor. "Raymond Garcia will gladly relinquish them when he knows that they are desired by so eminent and powerful a personage as the Bishop of Albi."

"I doubt it," replied the Bishop. "Raymond hath bought them for his bride, and he will not give them up."

"Why ask his consent, when it is in your power to seize them?"

"You mean that I may demand the red box on the pretext that we know that Garcia has hidden poison therein? The circumstantial evidence will be irrefutable."

"I had thought of that," replied the Inquisitor, and his hand caressed softly the packet of bon-bons in his bosom. "But Raymond Garcia may have removed the comfits."

"No matter, I can still swear that I saw them there; and the merchant can be found, who will add his testimony."

"Yours is sufficient," replied Foulques de Saint Georges hastily. "Yours and mine. Besides this matter of the poison is really only a minor detail. Heresy, heresy is the crime which will put him most surely in our power."

"But I have told you that Raymond Garcia is no heretic."

"My dear friend," said the Inquisitor, "have you forgotten that half of the property of condemned heretics reverts to their bishop? I congratulate your Grace that you can soon enlarge your gardens, and that when you itemise your schedule of this heretic's forfeited goods you may head your share with the Red Box."

II

IN WHICH THE RED BOX BECOMES THE CENTRE OF COMPLICATIONS

Raymond Garcia passed the eve of his wedding day with his betrothed, and twined the rope of pearls about her slender throat, not choosing to mar her pleasure in them by telling her, as he had learned from the merchant, that to possess them he had outbid the Bishop of Albi. For Félicie's woman's heart would have conjured visions of thwarted greed and rancour which seemed absurd to his intrepid mind.

She was instinctively as apprehensive of danger as a fawn, and had the same startled eyes and sensitive, quivering nostrils, which Raymond mirthfully said seemed to scent alarm in every footfall. Félicie de Lavaur had good excuse for her timidity. West of Albi on the way to Toulouse may still be seen the blackened ruins of the castle of her ancestors, sacked a century before the date of our story by the terrible Simon de Montfort during the crusade against the Albigenses.

Its lord with other noblemen who defended it were on its surrender massacred in cold blood, the peasants who had taken refuge within its

walls were burned alive, and its lady had been thrown into the castle-well and her life crushed out with stones. (See Note A.)

This had happened long ago, when Félicie's grandfather was a child; but hidden in an outbuilding he had witnessed it all, and although he lived to old age it was in a half-crazed condition.

All of his children and grandchildren were cowards. It was not their fault, but an abnormal condition of their brain cells which must repeat itself through many generations.

Félicie was trembling now for her beloved on account of the rash conduct of his younger brother Arnauld Garcia. Certain good Christians of Albi had lately been haled before the tribunal of the Inquisition, and Arnauld, a young doctor of laws, but learned beyond his years, had gone to Paris with a deputation from other towns of Languedoc, which had suffered in like manner, to plead their cause before the King.

Even while Raymond was quieting her fears concerning him there came a knocking at the barred gate, and Arnauld himself, who had but just arrived, intruded upon the lovers in his eagerness to tell of his success.

"It is triumph, Raymond!" he cried;

"triumph beyond our most sanguine dreams. Nay, fear not, Félicie, this is Brother Bernard Delicieux, who, though a Franciscan friar, dared to go with us as deputy from Carcassonne. We owe our victory in great part to him, for though his Majesty listened to my arguments he has not a legal mind, and was not so much impressed by their cogency as I had reason to expect; but he was completely won by Brother Bernard's eloquence, and we can snap our fingers now at Foulques de Saint Georges and at our Bishop, who persecute good Christians solely that they may possess their wealth."

"God send you be not over confident," murmured Félicie.

"Nay, listen," continued Arnauld Garcia. "The King hath commissioned the Vidame Jean de Picquigny to inquire into the transactions of the tribunal of the Inquisition at Carcassonne, and to reform its abuses, reminding him that it has no power to inflict the punishment of death, but can only judge suspected persons, and if it finds them guilty, recommend the civil authorities to deal with them. That is to say, hand them over to the Vidame himself, and we know that there does not live a more merciful man than Jean de

Picquigny. Interrupt me not, for there is better news still. His Majesty, justly indignant at the malpractices of Foulques de Saint Georges, has written to the heads of the Dominican order demanding his instant removal from the Holy Office. What say you to that, my children? I met the rogue in the street, and I could not forbear giving him a slap of my tongue. 'You left Albi suddenly, Maître Garcia,' he said; 'was your journey long?' 'Not longer nor more unexpected than your reverence may soon take,' I answered—and you should have seen his face. It was green with malice."

"But the Inquisition itself," insisted Félicie, "that has not been abolished, and its dreadful work will simply go on under another Inquisitor."

"Fear not, my daughter," Bernard Delicieux said kindly. "When once a just man is appointed, what can he find to punish? There has been no heresy in Albi; no, nor in all Languedoc for an hundred years."

The girl shuddered and crossed herself. "Knowest thou, reverend Father, what this horrible crime was which deserved such punishment? I have often wondered, but have never dared to ask."

"It was an error, my daughter, into which only the unhappy can fall. They thought marriage evil and suicide good, for the times were cruel and they believed that it were better that the human race should end of its voluntary act, than that it should fester in wickedness until God destroyed it with fire from heaven."

"No danger of such heresy here," laughed Arnauld. "Thou seest, Brother Bernard, how it is with yonder pair of turtle-doves."

The good friar raised his hands in blessing. "Marriage is a holy sacrament," he said. "God make you worthy of your happiness."

"How incredible that they should have thought it sin," Félicie murmured, "and suicide right. But if one must burn, I could understand that temptation."

"That could not I," her lover replied. "I had the opportunity when I bought these pearls of providing myself at the same time with swift escape by that road from any torture that may overtake me. I know not why I tell you that I scorned to do so, unless it be to prove to Félicie my confidence that the old evil days are past, and if not, then God grant me the death of a brave man, not that of a coward."

"Well spoken, my son," said Bernard, "and if trouble should come, wait patiently on God, for He still worketh miracles."

They knew not what they said, or that the time was near when both Raymond Garcia and Bernard Delicieux would long, as for the greatest of all boons, for one of those almond comfits with its merciful swift-dealing death.

Raymond and Félicie sat late together telling each other of their happiness, but as the bridegroom left his palace door on the morrow to meet his bride at the cathedral, rough hands were laid upon him, and he was arrested in the name of the Inquisition.

III

THE RED BOX AT CARCASSONNE

Foulques de Saint Georges had been too prompt in his work to please the Bishop of Albi. Had he delayed the arrest until after Raymond Garcia's marriage Félicie's jewels would have been among the goods and chattels confiscated, but now the disappointed Bishop searched the Garcia palace in vain for the red box.

Raymond Garcia had been immediately conducted to Carcassonne, where were the

prisons and tribunal of the Inquisition. His friends were denied access to him, but as he was marched with other prisoners through the city gate, they had stood in the crowd held back by the guards and shouted their greetings.

Félicie's heart was sick with terror; but love is stronger than fear. "Raymond," she cried, "wait for the miracle; you *shall* be set at liberty."

"I will wait," he answered with a brave smile. He could make no gesture of farewell with his manacled hands, but he threw his long hair back with a proud motion of his head and gazed fixedly at his beloved until out of sight.

"It is Raymond's part to wait for the miracle," said Arnauld Garcia, "but it is ours to perform it. God knows which has the harder task." He was consumed with indignation and apprehension, but he had no thought of failure. The seals of the Inquisition were on the doors of his home which he would never enter again. No matter, he had other property, enough, he flattered himself, to bribe the most grasping of judges, and he set out at once with Bernard Delicieux for Carcassonne. With them, in spite of her

father's entreaty, rode Félicie. De Lavaur loved his daughter, but he was distracted with fear. "The Bishop of Albi is my friend," he said. "I may be able to save Raymond better here than in a town of strangers. Meanwhile, here is money, but be cautious, and, above all things, restrain Arnauld. He is devoted, but rash. He has done enough already to place himself in the power of the Inquisition. I marvel that he was not arrested instead of our poor Raymond."

Arnauld Garcia was fully aware of the enmity of which he was the object, and he understood as clearly that his immunity lay in his influence with the King, which both he and his enemies exaggerated. Bernard Delicieux, the Franciscan, was exactly in the same case with himself, and with the help of this brave monk he felt himself a match for the Inquisitor.

Two monasteries of rival brotherhoods, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, flourished at this time at Carcassonne, and well exemplified the temper of their founders. To the disciples of the stern Saint Dominic had been confided the maintenance of the Inquisition. Since the Albigensian crusade, when Dominic

de Guzman made his *début* as the fanatic instigator of its atrocities, the order which he had founded in Toulouse for "the cure of souls" had spread until it divided with the Franciscans the control of the Church, and even the temporal power of Christendom. The two orders were the antipodes of each other in everything except ambition, for the Franciscans not only preached but practised charity, the doctrine of the gentle Francis.

At Carcassonne their conflict was now to be fought out by Foulques de Saint Georges and by Bernard Delicieux, each man determined to win, and each a leader in his own order.

From day to day Bernard and Arnauld Garcia confidently awaited the removal of Foulques from his office. The King had demanded this from the Dominican order—on the strength of the representations of Bernard and Garcia. But a heavy disappointment was in store for them, for the royal request was firmly refused. This was a blow indeed, but Arnauld showed no signs of despair.

"If the King of France is powerless to help us," he said to Bernard, "I will appeal to Spain. The Garcias are of the old Aragonese nobility. Fernan, Prince of Majorca, is my friend."

But Bernard laid a warning hand on Arnauld's arm.

"You could not please Foulques better than by such a course," he said. "Since the transfer of Languedoc to France, the old Spanish aristocracy have been closely watched for any signs of disloyalty. Beware how you play into the hands of your enemies. Wait, and trust to Jean de Picquigny. The Inquisitor may arrest whom he pleases and hand them to the Vidame. With no matter what instructions, Jean de Picquigny will burn no one, will hang no one, will torture no one. Wait."

But Foulques had foreseen the Vidame's leniency, and had his own scheme for thwarting it.

Day after day Raymond's friends waited for news of his trial. He was neither released nor delivered for punishment to the secular arm. The grim façade of the Dominican monastery, behind which were the prisons of the Inquisition, was not more silent than the monks who came and went. Nor were Arnauld Garcia's and Félicie's the only anxious hearts that besieged its gates for news of their beloved. Many arrests had been made in Cordes, Albi, and other neigh-

bouring towns. The distracted relatives of the victims swarmed the streets of Carcassonne, and the citizens of the town murmured their sympathy hoarsely and threw stones at Foulques de Saint Georges when he rode through the street.

The Inquisitor felt the pulse of the popular hatred when a tile grazed his cheek. He was as brave as he was cruel, but this was no time to sentence victims to the stake, for the city was on the verge of riot. But there were other less spectacular modes of compassing his ends, and he felt that in the long game of patience he held the winning cards.

He had scarcely entered his cloister when a visitor was announced.

It was the Vidame, Jean de Picquigny, who had been summoned by a committee of prominent citizens to demand from the Inquisition an accounting for its prisoners.

He was answered that the tribunal was not exceeding its powers. The time which must intervene between condemnation and punishment was not set by any law. If the tribunal in its mercy delayed handing its criminals over to a swift execution of their sentence, surely their friends should be the last to complain.

The King himself, in reminding the Inquisition so arrogantly that its office was to sequester guilty persons, not to punish them—*Ad custodiam non ad pœnam*,—had confirmed its right to imprison indefinitely. Let all rest assured that the prisoners would be duly fed "with the bread and water of affliction." If they died before they were brought to the stake, none could impeach the Inquisition for any violation of the exact letter of the law.

When the Vidame brought this answer to the crowd waiting in the public square, Félicie's heart stood still. "Did this mean perpetual imprisonment for Raymond? Would he remain many years in his dungeon?"

But Arnauld Garcia laughed bitterly, for he understood better than she the depth of cruelty hidden beneath this announcement. "Raymond will not linger so long," he said; "a year, perhaps, for he is strong, and he has given you his word not to destroy himself; but unless we can rescue him speedily, you may pray God to send death to his release."

"Are their prisons so horrible?" Félicie asked shudderingly.

"They are not imprisoned," cried a woman in like case. "Have you not heard?"

"Nay, woman, in mercy be silent!" commanded Arnauld; but she went on wildly.

"They are not imprisoned, they are *walled up alive!* Only a small opening is left before each niche, one stone unset, and through that hand-breadth a crust of bread and a cup of water are passed daily; just enough to keep death from ending their tortures; but at last, at last, the ravings of madness end in silence, and the masons set the missing stone."

The girl turned faint, and Arnauld bathed her face at the fountain in the centre of the square.

"Listen," he said, as the loud ringing of a tocsin smote upon the air. "The citizens of Carcassonne are not the men to suffer such atrocity, at least not when their blood is up, and Brother Bernard has it at the boiling point. He has been haranguing them in the church of the Franciscans, and that bell is the signal that they have sent him to tell the Vidame that unless he marches at their head as they go now to the Dominican Convent, and commands the opening of those living tombs, they will leave no stone of the convent upon another. Go into the house and wait us, Félicie, for I will bring Raymond to you in half an hour."

"Nay, I will go with you," said the girl; and they joined the throng of men, women, and children surging resolutely to the convent gates.

Jean de Picquigny had rejoiced to receive that message. If the town were in revolt, what blame could the King find if he somewhat exceeded his commission in preserving order? He addressed the excited populace, agreeing to give his sanction to the removal of their friends in an orderly manner to the citadel, there to wait under his care the pleasure of the King. This compromise accepted by the mob, the Vidame led the way to the Dominican convent and summoned the friars to unbar their gates.

Instead the Inquisitor appeared at an upper window and excommunicated him for thus violating their monastery.

Jean de Picquigny did not flinch, and the mob at his command battered in the portal and forced their way to the prison. They would have done violence to the panic-stricken friars but for Bernard, who held them in leash with his dominating voice. "This is a day of gladness," he cried; "let no blood be shed."

While the workmen toiled with pickaxe and

lever, the eloquent monk had a still more difficult task to restrain the frenzied women who pressed forward, wild to know if those they loved were still living. Félicie comforted a beautiful boy who called piteously on his father. "Listen, listen, my child," she said; "listen, and you will the sooner recognise his voice," and in thus controlling the child she schooled herself in that agony of suspense.

One by one the stones were torn from their place, and eyes that in despair had ceased to weep now rained happy tears upon the faces of their beloved.

They were still to be prisoners in the citadel, but how different their condition; lodged in airy chambers, supplied with all necessities, and, best of all, tenderly nursed by their friends and cheered by the hope of acquittal (for the King himself was soon to make a progress through Languedoc). What wonder that as Félicie pressed Raymond's wasted cheek against her own they believed that the miracle for which they had laboured and waited had been wrought, and that the bitterness of death was past?

IV

IN WHICH THE RED BOX ACCOMPLISHES THAT UNTO WHICH IT WAS FOREORDAINED

" And seld-seen costly stones of so much price,
And of a carect of this quantity,
May serve in peril of calamity
To ransom great kings from captivity."
MARLOWE'S " RICH JEW OF MALTA."

"Put not your trust in princes," said the Vidame, bitterly, when Philippe le Bel refused to interfere further, and referred the petitioners to the Pope.

"Nay, this is indeed the sovereign Pontiff's business," replied Bernard. "We should have gone to him at first."

There was but one way to reach the ear of Benedict XI., one of the most venal of the Popes, and when Bernard set out for Avignon, Félicie was among the first to confide to him her offering—the red box of pearls.

Bernard had two petitions to present to the Pope: the removal of the excommunication launched upon Jean de Picquigny and the release of the prisoners still retained by him as a half-way measure in defiance of Foulques de Saint Georges, but in deference to the authority of the Church. Bernard returned

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Bernard Delicieux Liberating the Prisoners.
From the painting by Jean Paul Laurens.
(By permission of Neurdein.)

baffled, though not absolutely hopeless. He had not been able to see his Holiness, but he had found a faithful friend in the Pope's physician, Maître de Villeneuve, who had been a fellow-student of Bernard's at the University of Montpellier. To him he had confided Félicie's pearls. They would reach Benedict XI. and must emphasise her appeal, for they were worthy a king's ransom.

No answer came, and desperation filled the souls of Bernard and Arnauld, for the two actors in the drama on whom they had most counted—the Pope and the brave Vidame—died suddenly within a few weeks of each other.

Be it known to the honour of the Franciscans that they celebrated a mass in behalf of the excommunicated Jean de Picquigny, and appointed Bernard Delicieux to preach his funeral oration. In the face of his triumphant enemies he declared that the Vidame, who had plead the cause of the persecuted unavailingly before King and Pope, had now gone to arraign the Pontiff before the bar of Almighty God. Such denunciation was an act of sublime heroism, but it was also sublime folly. It was a challenge to Foulques de Saint Georges to do his worst, and at the

death of the Vidame his victims had been remanded to their prisons in the Dominican monastery.

All of the negotiations entered into with Benedict XI. must be repeated to gain the ear of the new Pope, and Bernard again set out for Avignon to appeal to Clement V.

Arnauld Garcia hoped nothing from the mission, for Bernard had now no friend at the Papal Court. Months passed, and the good monk wrote to the impatient friends at Carcassonne that the Cardinals accepted his bribes, and assured him that the matter would in the due course of affairs be brought to the attention of his Holiness, who had hundreds of other petitions awaiting his consideration.

It was true that Clement was not overburdened with holy duties, but was acting on the principle of another Pontiff, "Enjoy we the papacy, since God has given it to us."

"But what of that?" asked the Cardinals. "Were a Pope's hours of relaxation to be impudently interfered with? The petitioners must wait."

Arnauld Garcia could wait no longer. The Inquisition was now burning its victims at the stake in the public square of Carcassonne.

Raymond's sentence had been pronounced and might be executed at any day. If not burned in public, he could not possibly linger long, and might even now be dying in the loathsome hollow within the walls. Desperate crises called for desperate remedies, and one was at hand.

Prince Fernand of Majorca, son of King Jayme of Aragon, had communicated with Arnauld and had promised that if Carcassonne would receive him as its lord, he would come with such an army as should hold it against all besiegers, and that under his suzerainty the Inquisition should be suppressed. It was a wild dream of a chivalrous and impractical boy, but to Arnauld Garcia, who had always looked upon the French as invaders of the province, there seemed no impossibility and no dishonour in returning to Spanish allegiance.

Arnauld therefore presented the proposition of the Prince at a secret meeting of the councillors of Carcassonne.

"Call this rebellion if you choose," he declared. "We hear nothing from Bernard. We are betrayed by the King of France, and deserted by the Pope. Shall we leave our own flesh and blood to rot in their living

graves, or shall we rescue them, if not by the help of God, then by the help of the devil?"

His impassioned arguments carried the day, and Arnauld was sent to Perpignan to meet Prince Fernand.

Félicie divined vaguely what was on foot, for though Arnauld had told her only that he was going on a most important journey which might change all their fortunes, she had feared this all along, and had vainly striven to hold his impulsive spirit within bounds. Earnestly she besought him to wait until Brother Bernard returned. She could only prevail upon him to communicate with him at Avignon.

"And if you fail?" Félicie asked in agony.

"I shall not fail," Arnauld replied, his eyes shining with excitement, and he had left her to battle alone with her misgivings.

Days and weeks passed without word from either Arnauld or Bernard, but at last there came a day when a traveller drew bridle at Félicie's door. It was her father, whom she had not seen since she left Albi, and he brought great news indeed.

Bernard's persistency had forced itself upon the Pope's leisure, and for once Clement had showed himself worthy of his name, and had

sent the Cardinal de Saint Vital and the Abbot of Fontefroide into Languedoc to investigate the causes of complaint. The deputation had gone first to Albi; and the Bishop, alarmed by the inquiries of these dignitaries, had made a feint of co-operation, attesting that certain of his flock who had been arrested by Foulques de Saint Georges were good Christians. In so doing he had seen his way to make the situation serve his own ends, and sending for De Lavaur had told him that the Cardinals were but men, and might be induced to clear Raymond Garcia. A certain red casket said to contain pearls had been scheduled among his confiscated effects, but had not been found in his palace. It was a crime to withhold goods which already belonged to the Church, but if the red box were immediately placed in his possession, the Bishop would pass over the fraud and assure the Cardinals as to Raymond's orthodoxy.

De Lavaur agreed without demur. Félicie was at Carcassonne, and would be overjoyed to purchase her lover's liberty with his gift. He would instantly seek her and return with the pearls. The Bishop, relying on De Lavaur's good faith and quite as much

upon his fears, gave him his blessing, and placed Raymond's name upon the list of those recommended to mercy. The Cardinals had passed him on the road, and were now at the Dominican convent. Félicie might prepare herself to welcome her lover.

It was no false hope, for the men who formed the committee, though selfish voluptuaries, were not essentially cruel, and were shocked by the result of their investigations, and that very night they set Raymond Garcia at liberty, together with thirty-nine other innocent men, who for five years (save for their respite in the care of Jean de Picquigny) had awaited trial in darkness and filth and misery inconceivable.

Some were violently insane, others blind, and Raymond's mind had undergone a strange eclipse, for he had mercifully forgotten all that had happened since his arrest, and woke from a long trance-like sleep weak and spent, but with the belief that it was his wedding-morn.

He was troubled when he found that he could not rise. "I shall be late for the ceremony," he said, "and Félicie is waiting for me at the cathedral."

"Nay, I am here, my own," she replied.

"You have been ill and must rest, but we shall be wedded soon, and I shall not leave you." He closed his eyes again quite content, blissfully unconscious of all the suffering through which he had passed, or of any cause of alarm for the future.

But Félicie's father was nearly crazed with consternation when he understood that his promise to the Bishop of Albi could not be fulfilled. "We must flee," he reiterated, "we must flee before the Bishop knows the truth and visits his displeasure upon us."

Bernard Delicieux, who had returned from Avignon in company with the papal envoys, also counselled immediate flight. He had heard from Arnauld. The conspiracy had failed, and was known to the authorities, and Arnauld would not return. "You must join him at Perpignan," said Bernard, "while you have the opportunity; in another twelve hours it may be too late. I will inform the Bishop of Albi, when I judge that you are out of harm's way, of the disposition which you have made of the pearls, and Monsieur de Lavaur can, if he chooses, make him a propitiatory gift of his real estate in Albi. As well make a virtue of a necessity, since it is quite in his power."

They laid Raymond in a gently swaying litter, and setting forth at night, by round-about ways and through obscure passes, crossed the Pyrenees; not tarrying even at Perpignan, or considering themselves safe until they arrived at Majorca, where under the protection of Prince Fernand, Raymond and Arnauld Garcia, Félicie and her father passed the remainder of their lives in grateful exile. News travelled slowly in those days, and not until it was long past did they learn of the martyrdom of their friend.

Bernard Delicieux might have escaped had he so elected, but his conception of his duty kept him at his post. The Pope's mercy was but a momentary spasm, and the Inquisition was not likely to overlook the man who had so long defied it.

Bernard was excommunicated, and tried on three charges:

1. That he had for many years opposed the holy office of the Inquisition.

2. That he had conspired against the King of France with the Prince of Majorca.

3. *That he had poisoned* Pope Benedict XI. (See Note B.)

The last charge was preposterous, but there lacked not witnesses to depose that Bernard

Delicieux had given the Pope's physician a small *Red Box*, remarking significantly as he did so: "And now I trust we shall soon have good news"; and that very shortly thereafter Benedict XI. died as was reported of an indigestion.

It was believed that the Inquisition possessed other secret evidence, for the verdict of the tribunal declared authoritatively that "the said *coffre* contained preparations, powders, by means of which the life of the said Benedict was cut short."

Degraded, tortured, condemned to the same punishment from which he had rescued so many, he was walled up alive in the Dominican monastery. How long his agony lasted no man knows.

"He had saved others, himself he could not save," and in all France there was no one brave enough to lift voice or hand for his release.

CHAPTER VII

THE ADVENTURES OF VER VERT

I

THE MISTLETOE QUEEN

"HA! HA!" cackled the Abbey parrot. "*Canticum novum*" ("a new song"), "*novum, novum*, ha! ha! ha!" and the diabolical bird burst into new songs indeed, which had never before wakened the echoes of that sacred cloister. They were ribald glees such as bargemen roar, and round, coarse oaths, with words of such low import that the gentle nuns heard them unabashed, for they understood them not.

But the community was grieved beyond measure, and the Abbess horror-stricken and indignant, while the little Queen Mistletoe was heartbroken, for her cherished playfellow Ver Vert, her only merry companion in this

peaceful but somewhat dull retreat, had fallen from grace and must be banished from the convent.

The child would now be doubly lonely and homesick, for her soubriquet of the Mistletoe Queen but too vividly told the truth that she was of foreign birth borne hither by an ill wind of fortune and unloved by the stock that nourished her.

It was Louis XI. of France who had first bestowed the name upon the little Austrian Princess, who was to be bred up in France as the affianced bride of his son.

"Take her to your heart, Charles," the dying King had commanded. "Her father, Maximilian, and I have played against each other all our lives, now in open feud, now striving to overreach each other in diplomatic intrigue, the stakes of our game the fair provinces of the Netherlands. I have won at last, for the Princess Marguerite brings them to you as her dowry. Both she and they are French now. Let her never feel herself an alien, but cherish her even as that sturdy oak nourishes its crown of mistletoe. Go, Charles, and welcome her, your little Mistletoe Queen."

The young prince obeyed reluctantly, but

scowled as the spoiled child repulsed his unwilling salute, crying:

"Go away, you ugly thing. You stutter, and you have big eyes like an owl. I want the pretty boy with the yellow hair and the pink cheeks, the pretty boy in the green velvet doublet."

The cheeks of the saucy page thus designated grew rosier still behind his plumed cap. He was only a young Savoyard, called Philibert le Beau, who had been sent to France to learn the manners of a courtier. They had come to him naturally enough, and Philibert was universally acknowledged the handsomest, the most accomplished, and the most engaging of the royal pages. If we add that his rank as second cousin of the Duke of Savoy was as inconsiderable as his fortune it will be understood that the Dauphin (in a few days by his father's death to be Charles VIII. of France) had no reason to fear the marked preference of his three-year-old betrothed.

Her affection then and always was a matter of supreme indifference to her betrothed, and he saw little of her, for his older sister, who had been appointed gouvernante of the little girl, presently took her to her own estates. But Marguerite's fancy for the handsome page

was fostered by this arrangement, for she was presently confided to the nuns of the Visitandines of Nevers to be fitted for the elevated station to which she was destined, and it was Philibert who from time to time carried her the letters of the boy-King. They were such as it was the duty of a punctilious young gentleman to send to his affianced; but alas! Charles not only did not write them but could not have done so, for his education had been shamefully neglected, and the mendacious missives were all penned by the King's sister, my Lady of Beaujeu. Philibert knew this right well, but he kept the secret for several years, not only out of loyalty to those who sent him, and because he had no heart to mar the child's pleasure in receiving them, but perhaps also because he feared that blabbing he might lose this privilege of occasionally seeing the little Mistletoe Queen.

She loved to prattle with him and to ask him questions of the Court, and he to answer. They were both lonely, homesick children, and the Sœur Melanie, who sat with them as they chatted in the cloister garden, saw no harm in their innocent interviews.

In Philibert's absence Marguerite's favourite playmate was the convent parrot. This

highly accomplished fowl was with good reason the boast of the community. The pious nuns had taught him not only to repeat the Ave Maria and a few other fragmentary Latin ejaculations, but he could sing portions of their favourite chant, the Veni Sanctus Spiritus.

It was Marguerite's delight to put him through his paces with Philibert for audience. The little girl saw no incongruity in the bird's senseless parodies of prayers and hymns; but the page was mightily amused, and his eyes sparkled with mischief as he exclaimed:

"By the mass, it would be rare sport to teach the creature some naughty jests, and how it would scandalise the good nuns to hear Ver Vert troll a drinking song."

"That shall he not," Marguerite replied in real distress. "Ver Vert is a good Christian, and his morals shall not be corrupted. He understands all that he says and what he hears. But listen while he chants the Sanctus, and you will believe, as Sister Melanie does, that he has a soul. Come, Ver Vert, a *canticum novum*—pretty Ver Vert, sing *Veni, veni*."

The eerie bird echoed the words and the notes perfectly.

"*Veni, lumen cordium*," trilled Marguerite.

VER VERT AT THE CONVENT OF THE VISITANDINES.
From an old print, permission of Longmans, Green & Co.

"*Veni, veni,*" Ver Vert responded doubtfully, his head cocked on one side as though he were striving to master the lesson. Then suddenly shrieking, "*Novum canticum, novum canticum,*" he burst into riotous and triumphant cackling of a new song indeed:

> "*Veni, veni, veni, Philibert,*
> *Lumen cordium meum, Philibert,*
> *Gaudium, cordium meum, Philibert,*
> *Veni, veni, veni, Philibert.*
> *Alleluia, Amen.*"

The boy shouted with laughter, but Marguerite, mortified and grieved beyond expression, closed the bird's beak with her fingers while the tears sprang to her eyes.

"Think not," she exclaimed, "that Ver Vert has ever heard me utter thy name. I know not with which of you I am the more vexed. Ah! he shall do penance. He shall have his cage darkened and shall fast till he shows true repentance. And thou, saucy page, go away, nor come again, for thou art in nowise the light or joy of my heart."

II

EPISODE OF THE PROFANE PARROT

With voice upraised in oaths profuse
He mastered all the language blackguards use;
With words obscene thus pouring from his beak,
The younger sisters deeme he spake in Greek.

GRESSET, TRANSLATED BY T. S. ALLEN.

Philibert had departed abashed, but in a few weeks he came again.

"Why have you returned?" Marguerite asked. "Could his Majesty find no other messenger to bring me his letters?"

"I came not from King Charles, dear lady," the page replied, "but from his Grace George d'Amboise. Think not, sweet mistress, that I have ever mentioned Ver Vert, but my message concerns that idiotic bird."

"Ver Vert!" exclaimed Marguerite. "What does his Grace know of our parrot?"

"It seems that every one has heard of him; his fame has even reached Lower Brittany, and the Duchesse Anne de Bretagne is wild to possess him."

"That we know already," replied Marguerite. "The Superior of a nunnery at Nantes has written our Abbess requesting her to sell or at least to lend Ver Vert, but she has refused to do so."

"Your Abbess must now yield," replied Philibert, "for the Bishop, who has some unknown reason for wishing to please the Duchess, has written that the parrot must be despatched at once."

Marguerite clenched her hand.

"I hate Anne de Bretagne. She has robbed me of my father, and now she would take Ver Vert from me."

"I know not your meaning, sweet mistress," Philibert replied in surprise.

"Perchance I have divulged a state secret," the girl exclaimed, "but it cannot long remain hidden. Thou knowest that my father, the Emperor Maximilian, is a widower. He has written me that he is to marry this same Duchess Anne of Brittany."

"The King of France will never suffer it," said the page, "for Brittany is a French province, and by this marriage the Duchess would carry it as her dower to Austria."

"I care not, I care not," wailed Marguerite. "Let who will possess Brittany, so I have my Ver Vert."

"Alas! dear Madame, his Grace insisted that I was to carry the parrot to Nantes, and you will see that the Abbess will not dare to refuse him. But," he added, touched by the girl's

grief, "I promise you that you shall have Ver Vert back again, for I have thought of an expedient."

"Have you indeed, dear Philibert? Only bring Ver Vert again, and I will forgive you for—for——"

"For what, dear Queen? Because he uttered my insignificant name?"

"Because you laughed — because you thought he had learned it from hearing me repeat it."

"Nay, that were too wildly sweet even to dream. I know my station, your Majesty, and presume only to be your devoted servitor. Ver Vert shall return, but it may be that when he comes your Abbess will cast him out. If that should be, intercede for me, most gracious lady, that I may possess him, and I will correct whatever faults he may in his absence have acquired, so that in the end you shall have him such as he leaves you."

Philibert's scheme is apparent, even to those who have not read the ancient ballad which Gresset rhymed of Ver Vert's next adventures. How, taking passage on a barge bound for Nantes, as he glided slowly down the winding Loire, out of lovely Touraine into distant Brittany, the precocious creature

picked up through the page's connivance the argot and even the oaths of the bargemen, and at the end of his voyage swore like a trooper and put them all to the blush by the unbridled licence of his conversation.

Arrived at Nantes, Ver Vert was carried to the convent, where the Duchess was waiting with the members of the community to receive him.

The parrot regarded his hostesses silently, accepting the sugar and cakes given him, but deigning no response to compliments and caresses.

"Dear bird," said the Abbess, "we have heard of thy marvellous aptitude for spiritual studies; that thou canst recite the Creed and hast mastered the Catechism. We have expected great edification from thy visit. Deign to do credit to thy teachers, our saintly sisters of Nevers, by responding to the questions which Sister Angelique will now read at random."

The nun read the first question on which her eye fell:

"By what means do we obtain salvation?"

"*Sang et mort!*" shrieked the parrot, repeating the skipper's favourite oath, "Blood and death, ye lazy swine."

Astonishment fell upon Ver Vert's gentle audience; but the Abbess rose to the occasion.

"Right aptly hast thou answered, O parrot, for it is indeed by the most precious blood that we are saved; and well do some of our number deserve thy reproach of indolence. Ask another question, Sister Angelique, for verily the wisdom of this creature is most marvellous."

"What shall be the portion of the impenitent throughout eternity?" the reader asked meekly.

But thereupon such terrible words burst in a rapid volley of reiteration from the parrot's throat that it seemed to his shocked audience that a very volcano of the infernal pit were belching forth its lurid flames in their midst.

"Holy Mother, preserve us!" gasped the Abbess. "I beseech thee, sweet parrot, speak more gently. Give not such terrific vehemence to thy utterances, true though they be. Put to him yet another question and mark well how unerringly he replies."

"Repeat thy Credo, O parrot," commanded Angelique.

"Women and Wine!" cackled Ver Vert, bursting at the same time into fiendish

laughter, and varying this performance with an imitation of the popping of corks.

The nuns looked at one another in consternation, while the Abbess, rising, rebuked Ver Vert sternly.

"I adjure thee, profane creature, to answer the question which I shall now put thee with reverence, and utter not the name of thy Creator with blasphemous levity. Who made thee, O parrot?"

"The Devil! the Devil! the Devil!" cackled Ver Vert in high glee, while the nuns, crossing themselves in horror, or thrusting their fingers into their ears, rushed from the room.

After this Anne de Bretagne had no longer any desire to possess the disreputable Ver Vert, who was forthwith ignominiously returned to the Visitandines of Nevers, to the inexpressible scandal of that innocent community. The nuns could harbour the debauched bird no longer in their holy cloister, and Marguerite's petition that he should be given to Philibert was disregarded,—such a libel on the conversation of the convent could not be allowed to exist; and greatly to the grief of the Mistletoe Queen, Ver Vert was condemned to death at the hands of the Abbey butcher.

At his next visit Marguerite told Philibert of the fate of her pet, and he strove to comfort her.

"The flesher is a miserly man," he said; "he knows that the parrot is very valuable, and he could not carry out the command of the Abbess. I will search the world over, dear lady, until I find Ver Vert and bring him back to you."

Marguerite dried her eyes, and Philibert went upon his quest, with all the enthusiasm of a young knight-errant. He had not far to seek, for on his return to Amboise he saw a bird-fancier, with a hoop suspended from his neck on which were perched falcons and other birds, which he was crying through the streets. Even before Philibert realised that there was a green parrot among them, he heard his own name shrieked; and a shrill falsetto voice greeted his ear with the familiar

> "*Veni, veni, Philibert,*
> *Lumen cordium meum, Philibert.*"

Running after the vender he purchased the lost favourite (though in so doing he parted with an entire month's allowance), and carried it triumphantly to his lodgings, where he attempted to reform the conversation of

the graceless outcast by a rigorous course of penance and discipline. Whenever Ver Vert repeated the bargemen's oaths the page plunged the offender in the cold water butt, and then flung him into a dark closet. He retaught him the Ave Maria, too, with such patient persistency that, according to the grants of various sovereign Pontiffs for such repetition, Philibert and Ver Vert must have gained between them indulgences for upwards of two thousand years. Philibert would also have had great credit with his landlady for his piety, but for the parrot's lamentable lapses into blasphemy, which were also attributed by horror-stricken listeners to the wileful page.

With such occupation Philibert solaced his loneliness and fed his hopes, often varying the sacred words with impassioned repetition of the name of Marguerite, for nine years had passed since Little Queen Mistletoe had been transplanted to France, and a young man's heart was beating under the page's velvet doublet, a heart eaten with envy, and with love stronger than its despair.

III

OF THE ADVENTURE WHICH BEFELL QUEEN MISTLETOE WITH A CATERPILLAR AND HOW THE REFORMED PARROT CAME TO HIS OWN AGAIN

Philibert seemed doomed to be the bearer of unwelcome messages to the little Queen, and on his next coming to the convent he brought one which pleased her even less than the summons for the parrot.

During the years that had drifted by while Marguerite had been in seclusion with the Visitandines she had profited by her opportunity for study and had outstripped the simple nuns in her acquirements, so that experts from the outer world were secured for her further advancement. Her favourite teachers were Jean Bourdichon, illuminator and painter of miniatures, and Michel Colomb, sculptor, for the young girl was passionately fond of all things beautiful.

Her vexation may therefore be imagined when Philibert brought her word that the two artists were ordered to Nantes, the one to enrich a *Book of Hours* for the Duchess of Brittany, and the other to carve her father's tomb.

The unfortunate page had to bear her pique and to listen to unmerited reproaches.

"This Anne de Bretagne," Marguerite cried, "has robbed me of everything which I cared for. She took my father and Ver Vert, and now she demands my best-loved teachers. She is a blight on all my joys, a worm, a caterpillar. Will no one crush her for me? What will she covet next? Will it be you, Philibert. Nay, I misdoubt she has suborned you already, since you only come to take my treasures to her."

The youth flushed, but answered proudly:

"She can never have me in anywise, for I am your true servitor until death, though I get naught for my fealty but your displeasure. If I were rich I would give Michel Colomb a commission which would not only take him out of the employ of this grasping Duchess, but would fulfil a vow made long ago by my mother, which for my sake she neglected, to the displeasure doubtless of the saints."

"What was the vow, Philibert? Tell me and forgive my hasty tongue."

"We were at our hunting château at Brou in Savoy, when my father was dangerously wounded by a boar. I shall never forget my mother's shriek when they brought the litter into the château and she saw him, as she thought, dying before her. But Saint

Hubert was good, and when she invoked him, promising to build an Abbey where my father received his hurt if only he recovered, that patron of huntsmen so aided the physicians that my father was presently well again."

"And you say that your mother's vow was unfulfilled for your sake, Philibert. How could that be?"

"It costs money, most dear Queen, to build and endow Abbeys, and, as my father's revenues were not great, my mother laid aside of her own for me that my future might be well assured. I could not have come to the Court of the French King nor have known my Queen had my mother not so chosen, so I shall never regret her choice, no matter what misfortune that unfulfilled vow may bring."

"Bid Messer Colomb come to the cloister," said Marguerite. "He is from Burgundy, my mother's country, and learned his art by carving my ancestors' tombs in Dijon, under the great master Claux Sluter. He is my hereditary vassal, and owes me service on demand. He will do anything for me, and he shall enrich your mother's Abbey with glorious sculpture. Hast thou not marked the "Vision of Saint Hubert" over the chapel door at

Amboise? He shall better that work, noble though it is, for the Abbey at Brou."

"Nay, dear lady," pled Philibert, "you forget that my mother has no commission to give."

"But I—I have certain moneys, Philibert."

"Most dear and generous mistress, my mother could not accept such a gift, nor would King Charles suffer thee to give it."

"And my father," said Marguerite, bitterly, "is shortly to wed Anne de Bretagne, and will help her rather than me. Said I not that she had robbed me of everything?"

"She may give your father back to you, my Queen, and you to him, for there are strange rumours afloat."

"What rumours?" Marguerite asked eagerly, but Philibert answered evasively that he paid no attention to the wild stories that ran from mouth to mouth, nor must she, but believe always that he was her devoted knight, ready to serve her in any emergency. He turned her thoughts from his unfortunate remark by telling her how he had found Ver Vert, and amused her by an account of his trials in endeavouring to reform the reprobate, so that he left her smiling; but after he had gone her thoughts reverted to this hint of

strange rumours. What could they be? The nuns looked at her strangely, some with less of deference than formerly, and others with an unwonted pity.

There was war she knew between King Charles and the Duchess Anne, for the King as her feudal sovereign had insisted that the Duchess had no right to marry without his consent and carry the fair province of Brittany out of France to Maximilian of Austria, and Marguerite's father had, as in duty bound, sent Austrian troops to support his betrothed in her stand against the King of France. It was a peculiar position in which Marguerite found herself, with her father at war with her affianced husband; but she could not see how she was to blame or in what way her own fortunes could be affected by these circumstances. She was heartily with Charles in this quarrel, and hoped that he would compel her father to relinquish the Breton Duchess, whom she had never desired for a stepmother; and in some way, inexplicable to Marguerite, Anne de Bretagne knew this and hated her cordially.

Marguerite's two teachers passed into the employ of the Duchess, but Jean Bourdichon, returning presently on some errand to Nevers, showed Marguerite the illuminations for the

Book of Hours which he was executing for his new patroness. They were indeed very beautiful. Each page was bordered with a plant in bloom or in fruitage exquisitely painted on a panel of beaten gold. In and out of the foliage fluttered gauzy-winged dragon-flies or honey-laden bees, while snails and beetles, gorgeous butterflies and velvety moths, crickets and grasshoppers, and all the myriad insect life of the garden, with birds and little animals of the wild-wood, disported themselves among the flowers.

Marguerite exclaimed with delight and admiration as she noted the exquisite pains with which each detail was depicted,

> "Finished down to the leaf and the snail,
> Down to the eyes on the peacock's tail."

Suddenly she started violently.

"What does this mean, Maître Jean?" she cried. "A branch of mistletoe, my own device, eaten across by a furry caterpillar? Who told her that I called her that?"

"Not I, noble lady, not I; but some one must have told her, for she bade me show it to you, and ask you to mark not alone that the loathly worm has fangs to gnaw, but that

it changes in the fulness of time to a glorious butterfly."

"So this is a studied insult. I wonder, Jean Bourdichon, that you had the hardihood to bring me her boasts and threats."

"Alas! sweet mistress, I am not mine own master; but take this as a warning, for indeed if no one else has told you what plots are hatching, it were well you were prepared, even though I lose your favour in the thankless duty."

"Say on, Jean Bourdichon," the girl commanded bravely, but the blood forsook her heart when she knew that King Charles had met his rebellious subject, Anne de Bretagne, and that they had concluded a treaty, whereby in spite of the fact that each was otherwise contracted, all of their differences were to be happily adjusted by speedy marriage.

The astounding news was quite true, and the repudiated Queen Mistletoe was shortly returned with little ceremony to her equally humiliated father. Philibert, who had sought and been denied permission to join her modest escort, attempting to do so secretly, was arrested and detained in the donjon of the castle of Amboise for several weeks. When set at liberty he learned that the Emperor

Intende voci orationis mee:
rex meus et deus meus
Quoniam ad te orabo domine
mane exaudies vocem meam
Mane astabo tibi et videbo: quo
niam deus volens iniquitatem
tu es
gymo: neq; permanebunt in
tuis ante oculos tuos
Odisti omnes qui operantur
iniquitatem: perdes omnes q̄
loquuntur mendacium
virum sanguinis et dolosum
abhominabitur dominus: ego
autem in multitudine misē
cordie tue

a changes in the fulness of time to a glorious butterfly."

"So this is a studied insult. I wonder, Jean Bourdichon, that you had the hardihood to bring me her taunts and threats."

"Alas! sweet mistress, I am not mine own master; but take this as a warning, for indeed if no one else has told you what plots are hatching, it were well you were prepared, even though I have spent [illegible] to the thankless duty."

Mistletoe Border.

From the "Livre d'Heures" of Anne de Bretagne, preserved in the Bibliotheque National at Paris. The illuminations were executed by Jean Bourdichon in the early part of the sixteenth century.

[illegible] her heart when she knew that King Charles had met his rebellious subject, Anne de Bretagne, and that they had concluded a treaty, whereby in spite of the fact that each was otherwise contracted, all of their differences were to be happily adjusted by speedy marriage.

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Visq; quercamus.

Intende voci orationis mee:
rex meus et deus meus
Quoniam ad te orabo dñe
mane exaudies vocem meam
Mane astabo tibi et videbo: quo
niam non deus volens iniquitatem
tu es
Neq; habitabit iuxta te malig
nus: neq; permanebunt in
tuis ante oculos tuos
Odisti omnes qui operantur
iniquitatem: perdes omnes q'
loquuntur mendacium
virum sanguinum et dolosum
abhominabitur dñs: ego
autem in multitudine misericordie tue

Maximilian, stung to the quick by the affront put upon him by the French King, had lost no time in concluding an alliance with Spain, and had affianced Marguerite to the Infant, the son of Ferdinand and Isabella. The Princess was even now on her way to Madrid with her brother; it was to be a double marriage, for Maximilian's son Philip was to wed the Infanta Joana, and the Netherlands, which they had together inherited from their mother, were now destined to pass under the cruel dominion of Spain.

But Marguerite's voyage was so tempestuous as to be considered ill-omened, and she was doomed to return shortly, not indeed rejected, but widowed, for the bridegroom expectant sickened and died.

Broken-hearted, as it was supposed, by her double disappointment, but in reality with hopeless longing and thwarted first love, the Princess announced her intention of taking the veil, a decision little to the liking of her imperial father.

Nothing but marriage, he argued, could drive such a notion from her brain, and there came a day when he announced that he had arranged a new alliance for her, not with a king, indeed, but with the reigning Duke of

Savoy, whose possessions adjoined her own, and united with them would make a fair kingdom.

Marguerite shook her head.

"I have been too many times betrothed. I shall never be wedded."

"That you shall, my daughter; the agreement is already signed, for the Duke made the first advances, and that immediately on his unexpected accession to the crown of Savoy. On my word he has sent you a strange betrothal present. His envoy waits. Will you receive him?"

"Nay," replied Marguerite. "Write the Duke that I thank him, but it may not be. See, I have written my own epitaph. Let it be my answer to the Duke:

"'Though twice I was wedded, unfortunate I,
My doom it was written, a maiden I die.'" [1]

As she spoke there arose an unseemly clamour in the antechamber; prayers mingled with imprecations, and then, more startling still, the Ave, with Marguerite's name substituted for Mary's, repeated with a tender intonation:

[1] Epitaph written for herself by Marguerite:

"Cigit Margot, la gente demoiselle
Qui eut deux maris et se morut pucelle."

"Ave, Marguerita, regina angelorum!
Ave, Marguerita, domina cœlorum!
Ave, Marguerita! Ave, Marguerita!
Gaude, virgo gloriosa,
Gaude, gaude, Marguerita!"

"What sacrilege is this?" cried the Emperor. But Marguerite, starting to her feet, cried:

"It is Ver Vert! *Veni*, *veni*, Ver Vert! *Veni*, Philibert, *veni*, Philibert."

A young man, richly dressed in green velvet, bearing a parrot on his wrist, entered and swept the floor with his jewelled cap. It was indeed Philibert, now Duke of Savoy, who had come as his own ambassador. But Ver Vert, the long desired, was forgotten in that meeting, and hopped disconsolately from chair to chair, fluttering his wings and shrieking, now with a supernatural imitation of Marguerite's own voice that Philibert was her *lumen cordium*, now with an equally successful parody of the Duke's more manly vocalisation, declaring that Marguerite was the queen of angels and mistress of heaven.

The reunited lovers did not even hear these apposite remarks, learned from their own utterances, but gazed enraptured into one another's eyes until Ver Vert, disgusted at

their neglect, changed his rôle to that of the profane bargemen, and the air corruscated with maledictions.

In spite of his sad lapses into language unfit for ears polite, Ver Vert lived thereafter the life of a pampered favourite, and when he died (see Note A), as it was said, of grief occasioned by Marguerite's absence, his death and devotion were celebrated by the court poet of Savoy in a heroic poem of many stanzas, called *Le Triomphe de l'Amant Vert.*

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH OF BROU

On her palfrey white the Duchess
  Sat and watched her working train,
Flemish carvers, Lombard gilders,
  German masons, smiths from Spain.

Clad in black, on her white palfrey,
  Her old architect beside,
There they found her in the mountains
  Morn and noon and eventide.

. . . . . .

Round the tombs the carved stone fretwork
  Was at Eastertide put on,
Then the Duchess closed her labours
  And she died at the St. John.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

IN the obscure town of Brou in northern Savoy stands possibly the most beautiful example of late Gothic architecture to be found in all France. It came into being in that transitional period in the early sixteenth

century, when French genius was fired to emulate, not copy, the newly imported Italian Renaissance.

This exquisite church has been sung by enthusiasts, and analysed as a model of its kind in scientific monographs. It was so thoroughly appreciated even at the time of the Revolution, when so much that was beautiful was ruthlessly destroyed, that it was one of the few monuments protected and ordained to be kept up at the expense of the state.

It is only the deserted chapel of a vanished and forgotten Benedictine Abbey, but wealth was lavished here without stint, and the most skilful citizens laboured together for years to make it the masterpiece which it is.

All the lines in the construction of this marvel flow together with the grace of living, growing things culminating in curves not only delight-giving in themselves, but governed by exact law, while every detail is enriched with a lacework of intricate carving not to be rivalled in prodigality by the ornament upon the jewel-box of a Princess.

And such a casket it really is, built to contain the greatest treasure of an Emperor's daughter.

We read that after three years of blissful

ROOD SCREEN IN THE CHURCH OF BROU.

wedded life, the Duke of Savoy, Philibert le Beau, was killed while hunting, and that his widow, Marguerite of Austria, devoted the remainder of her life to building him one of the most beautiful monuments in all the world.

That she succeeded few who have seen the Church of Brou will deny. "How great must have been the love of this woman for this man," is the thought of every one who stands beside their glorious tombs.

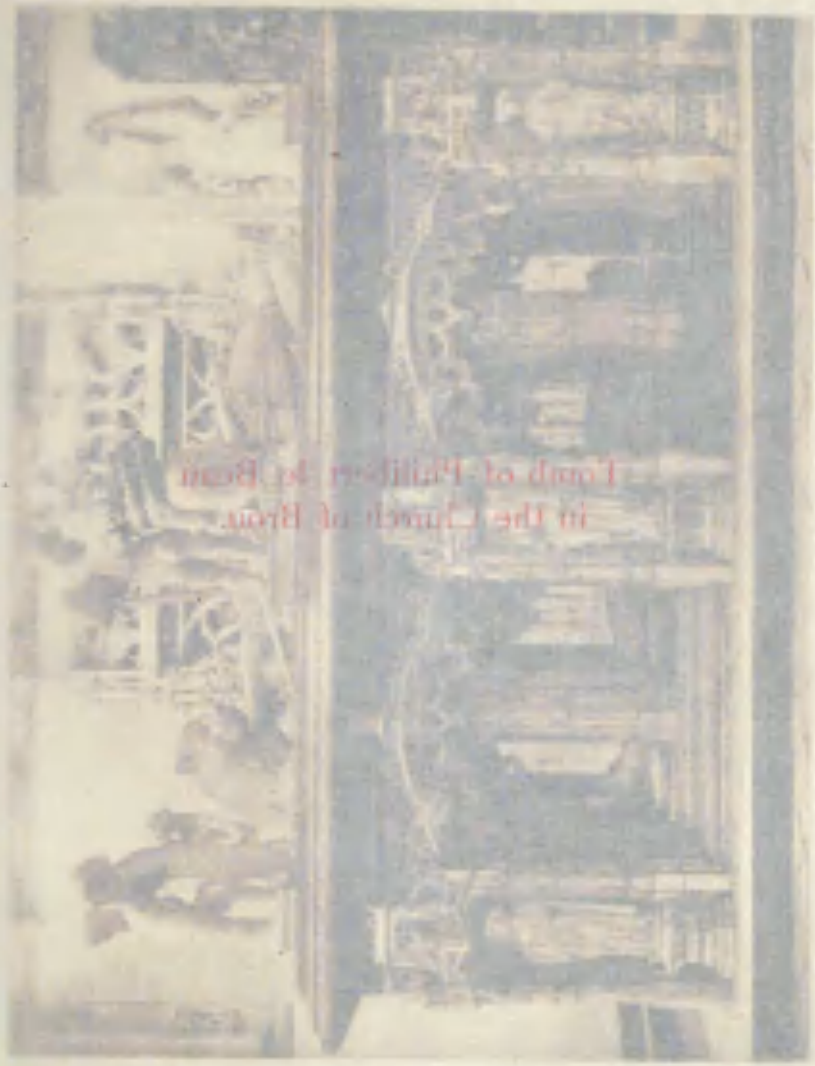
It was the sculptor Michel Colomb who fashioned them, the same who designed the tomb at Nantes for the Duke of Brittany, at the command of his daughter, the Duchess Anne. But at Brou he returned to an earlier style, which he had learned while working on the "*sepultures de feuz messeigneurs les ducs de Bourgoigne*," when he was the apprentice of Maître Claux Sluter at Dijon; he was working now for a descendant of those nobles who wrote "Rash" and "Bold" and "*Sans Peur*" after their names, no man gainsaying their right to those titles.

In the centre of the choir stands the magnificent double tomb of Philibert. Within the lower portion, partly concealed by the rich canopy, his corpse lies naked and stark, as was the ghastly custom of the time, a

fashion so startlingly followed in the tombs of the Abbey of St. Denis. But upon the upper story, as it were on a royal couch, he lies as in sleep regally robed, while weeping loves hold his helmet and gaze mournfully at his beautiful face.

The Antinous of his time, he was called, and the resemblance to the demigod of the Vatican is especially striking in the lovely curves of the mouth and chin. His face is turned to the left, where Marguerite's own tomb was placed, like his own in general design, for she, too, is shown in state robes, and in the alcove beneath in a simple shroud over which her long hair ripples to her feet in glorious abundance.

Her motto is carved upon a twisted banderole, "*Fortune, infortune, forte une*" ("In fortune and misfortune one woman is brave"). It was no empty boast, as the employ of her years of widowhood in wise government of the Netherlands testified. Philibert's motto, "FERT," many times repeated, was that of the Order of the Annunciade. The meaning of the letters is a mystery. Some maintain that they are the initials of the words, "*Fortitudo ejus Rhodum tenuit*" ("His valour held Rhodes"), in allusion to the defence of that island by an early Duke of Savoy. Lately the letters lent



Tomb of Philibert le Beau in the Church of Brou.

themselves to the motto "*Fiat Emmanuel Rex tuus*" ("Make Emmanuel thy King"); but it is very possible that they simply form the Latin word for "He brings,"—benefits of various kinds being understood. To Marguerite he brought joy and love for three years only, but the husband who died at twenty-four was mourned all her life.

Following established custom, Philibert should have been entombed in the royal Abbey of Hautecombe on the lovely lake of Le Bourget—for this had been the burial-place of the Princes of Savoy from time immemorial.

But such community even in death could not be endured by Marguerite. She must have her dead all to herself, recognising the right of but one other to share his long home, as living she had shared his love. For there is another tomb in the church, a little apart from the others, in a canopied niche on the right hand of Philibert. It is that of his mother, Margaret of Bourbon, who had vowed to build an abbey on this spot on the recovery of her husband from a wound received in hunting. She had never carried out that vow, and when her son was killed in the same way, his widow may well have imagined that Saint Hubert claimed his dues.

During her long residence in France, as the betrothed of the Dauphin, Marguerite had learned to appreciate that wonderful revival of art of which Michel Colomb was one of the foremost examples. Anne de Bretagne and her husband Charles the Eighth now posed as the most munificent of art patrons; and Marguerite's love for beauty was only equalled by her hatred for these two: the man who had repudiated her, and the woman who was her successful rival. She would not be outdone by them, and Michel Colomb was ordered to surpass all work which he had previously executed under their patronage. So that hatred and mortified pride joined hands with love and sorrow and piety in building this abbey church.

Another shared with the King and Queen of France in Marguerite's resentment. The great Cardinal, George d'Amboise, had brought about their marriage, and was now Prime Minister of the kingdom. He, too, was a patron of art, and was building at this time his superb Château of Gaillon. It was Marguerite's pleasure to call Michel Colomb and other of his favourite artists from his employ, and to thwart him not only in his private fancies but also in diplomatic matters of

great moment. She persuaded Henry VIII. of England to enter into a league with her against France, and outwitted Cardinal d'Amboise in the Treaty of Cambrai, and Louise de Savoie (mother of Louis XII.) in the Paix des Dames. As Garnier wrote of her: "No more active or intelligent minister [for the Emperor Charles V.] could have been found, endowed with genius, trained in adversity, the most dangerous and obstinate of the enemies of France."

In the intervals of her many duties she visited the growing abbey church. It was more than her recreation from state affairs, it was her ruling passion. Her architect was Maistre Loys Van Boglem, the best in the Low Countries, and her nephew, the Emperor Charles V. (for whom she governed the Netherlands so well), sent her the cleverest artificers of Spain and Austria and Italy. The radiant stained glass alone, or the marvellous wood-carving of the choir stalls would have made the church famous. Philibert had died in 1504. Marguerite began her task two years later, and continued it for twenty-four years. At last it was finished, at a cost of two million two hundred thousand francs, and twelve friars were installed in the little Abbey

to pray for the souls of those whose ashes it enshrined.

It is said that Marguerite was perusing a holy book, the *Chronicles of Fontevrault*, when the news was brought her that the Abbey was completed. She had just read the passage:

"Understand, my love, that I am in great peace, but I know not how to enter into fulness of joy without thee. Prepare thee and come at thy quickest, that we may present ourselves together before the Lord."

Looking up from her book the Duchess greeted her old architect, and stepping impulsively forward threw to the floor and stepped upon a wine-glass which a page was offering her. The broken glass cut through the delicate satin slipper, inflicting a wound which speedily gangrened. Amputation was considered necessary, and a preparation of opium was administered. But from that sleep Marguerite never woke, and Michel Colomb prepared her couch by the side of the lover of her youth, in the abbey-church of Brou.

"So rest for ever—rest O princely Pair!
Or if ye wake let it be then when rain
Doth rustlingly above your heads complain
On the smooth leaden roof, and on the walls,

MARGARET OF AUSTRIA.
Statues on her tomb in the Church of Brou.

Shedding her pensive light at intervals
The moon through the clerestory windows shines,
And the wind washes through the mountain pines.
Then gazing up 'mid the dim pillars high,
The foliaged marble-forest where ye lie,
"Hush," ye will say, "it is eternity.
This is the glimmering verge of Heaven, and these
The columns of the heavenly palaces."
And in the sweeping of the wind your ear
The passage of the Angels' wings will hear,
And on the lichen-crusted leads above
The rustle of the eternal rain of love."

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

CHAPTER IX

THE FLAGEOLET OF SAINT BRUNO

A LEGEND OF LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE

I

Knock; pass the wicket! Thou art come
To the Carthusians' world-famed home,
Where ghost-like in the deepening night
Cowl'd forms brush by in gleaming white;
The chapel where no organ's peal
Invests the stern and naked prayer;
With penitential cries they kneel
And wrestle, rising then with bare
And white uplifted faces stand
Passing the Host from hand to hand.

Stanza from *La Grande Chartreuse*,
MATTHEW ARNOLD.

"THE silent courts" of La Grande Chartreuse echoed with unwonted confusion on a certain spring morning of the year 1562, as hurrying feet, smothered ejacula-

tions—not of prayer,—and terrified faces proclaimed the panic of the peaceful monks. Until now through all the tempests of war which had beaten upon France the monastery had remained inviolate, protected by its inaccessibility. All around it were the bastions of the Alpine ranges, while the wild beasts were the sentinels of the monks and the avalanches their artillery.

And what could pillaging soldiers hope to find in this austere retreat? The Carthusians followed the strict rule of poverty which Saint Bruno had enjoined upon them. Naked stone corridors connected the tiny houses and garden plots in which each member of the community laboured and prayed in the most rigorous self-denial and in absolute solitude. Even the apartment of the General[1] of the order exhibited the same severity. And yet the information which had just been brought them was true. Captain Biron had set out from Grenoble that morning with the avowed purpose of sacking the Abbey of La Grande Chartreuse, and the ferocious Baron des Adrets was following with the main body of the Huguenot troops.

It was the too famous Chartreuse liqueur

[1] The Superior of the Cathusians bears the title of General.

and the exaggerated report of riches amassed by its sale which had attracted the plunderers. The common soldiers had visions of cellars filled with casks and tuns, as

> "Silent and brown externally
> As any Carthusian monk might be."

The leaders thought of the hidden gold which torture could reveal, and the Baron des Adrets hoped that the monks might be unwilling to deliver it on first demand, for in cruelty he was a madman, his mania taking a fixed form, a fiendish delight in watching human beings fall from a great height. When a youth he had seen a friend, with whom he was hunting, roll over the edge of a cliff in the embrace of a bear. The spectacle had naturally made an immense impression upon him, but, strange to say, not one of horror. It thrilled him with such pleasure that he caused it to be re-enacted many times, forcing the garrisons of surrendered fortresses to leap from the platforms of their highest towers, while he laughed at the contortions of the falling bodies.

Little wonder that the monks of La Grande Chartreuse were panic-stricken, since this monster was their expected guest.

The very reverend Dom Jerome, General of the order, dispersed the community, sending them in groups to different Carthusian houses, while he himself remained to face the enemy, as he fancied, alone. But as he closed the Abbey gate on the last of the fugitives, a young monk called Aloysius came from the porter's lodge.

"I will keep the gate, my Father," he said, "and will endeavour to entertain these pilgrims suitably. I beseech you to preserve to us your valuable life. Fadet, the goatherd, who distanced the Huguenots in bringing us the news of their coming, knows every path across the mountains, and will guide you over Les Echelles to the Commandery of the Knights of St. John. You little know to what a devil incarnate you submit yourself in awaiting the approach of Des Adrets."

"I know," replied Dom Jerome, "for I know your history. And since you have already experienced the cruelty of this man, why do you remain? Is it to protect me from danger and insult, or is it that you may repay evil with forgiveness?"

The young man met the gaze of his superior doggedly and shook his head. "I am powerless to prevent your lingering," said the

General sadly. "A great crisis in your life is approaching. Let me at the close of this ordeal take you to my heart as my son."

Aloysius knelt. His face bent toward the earth was convulsed with emotion, but he made no reply. His superior had demanded too much.

No one at La Grande Chartreuse but Dom Jerome knew the history of the young monk. The General had brought him to the monastery on his return from a temporary absence. For months even the servitor who passed the food through the wickets was not aware of the presence of a guest in the apartment of his superior, but knowing how abstemious was the habit of the General, rejoiced that his appetite had returned, and that he now ate like a Christian. It was long before the stranger was prepared to accept the peace of the cloister; but a day came when he fell at the feet of his preserver and begged to be admitted into the Order, and the brotherhood were ware of a novice with a face expressive of deep bitterness disfigured by recent burns.

It was at the siege of Valence by the Huguenots that the Baron des Adrets had set his seal on the countenance of the young man.

The city, over-confident in the strength of

its fortifications, had laughed at the attacking Calvinists, and on the very night on which it was captured a ball was in progress, in an old palace whose foundations were bathed by the Rhone. All of the younger members of the Catholic nobility were present, and among them an officer in the command of the Duc de Guise, who was to be known later as Brother Aloysius. With him was his betrothed, the beautiful daughter of the Comte de la Mothe.

The attack had been made in another quarter of the city, and the young people, accustomed to the sound of cannonading, had not realised in the midst of their festivity that Valence had been taken by assault. As the Huguenots marched toward the brilliantly lighted château Des Adrets was asked by one of his captains in what way the dancing was to be stopped.

"Not only let them dance," he replied, "but force them to do so. Do you see that balcony overhanging the river? Remove the iron balustrade—" He whispered further orders in his subordinate's ear, and then gloatingly watched their execution from a small boat in midstream.

His soldiers entered the ballroom, the

dances were interrupted for an instant, then while the heavy balustrade fell into the river the musicians struck up a quicker measure, and the waltzers, driven by the pikemen through the open casements, whirled downward to their death.

The captain added a brilliant touch to the spectacle. As the young girls passed him he set fire with a torch to their filmy dresses, and they shot like circling fireworks into the black waters.

Aloysius and his betrothed had fallen thus, locked in each other's arms. So, in the bleak morning, they were found, cast upon the bank farther down the stream, Aloysius unconscious, severely burned, but still clasping to his breast the charred corpse of his beloved.

II

Lord, I have fasted, I have prayed,
  And sackcloth has my girdle been.
To purge my soul I have essayed
  With hunger blank and vigil keen.
O God of Mercy! Why am I
Still haunted by the self I fly?

R. H. Froude.

It was in this sore trouble that Dom Jerome had found the young man, and had brought

him to La Grande Chartreuse, in the hope that the grandeur of the encircling mountains, the calm of solitude and silence, would work their healing influence upon his tortured spirit and prepare it for the ministrations of religion. And surely this was no baseless dream, for the most unimpressible of tourists who visits La Grande Chartreuse to-day cannot fail to be profoundly moved by the beauty and sublimity of its long approach.

As his open carriage plunges into the twilight of the heavily wooded gorge, tapestried with luxuriant moss, the repose of the everlasting hills settles upon him, the charm deepening into mystery and a haunting sense of the occult and supernatural.

For startling surprises are discovered at every turn of the road; now the Bridge of Saint Bruno springs across the ravine far above our heads, its single arch abutting from opposite crags,—and now the road is tunnelled on one side under the overhanging cliff, or built out upon the other, a narrow shelf above the precipice.

The cliffs close more narrowly upon the defile as he ascends, the precipice sinks to an abyss which his brain refuses to fathom, its frothing torrent which no man or horse could

stem showing as a narrow ribbon; while the firs extend their blasted arms at more grotesque angles; and the pines, shooting higher in a vain attempt to reach the light, cast waving shadows,—which seem to be those of dryads flitting noiselessly at his approach. All the poetry that may lie latent in his soul is stirred as by enchantment. La Grande Chartreuse has taken him to her heart, and he hears in imagination the chant of the Pilgrims as in *Tannhäuser*, and feels that he is himself a pilgrim to a remarkable region, where enthusiasts have believed that they saw visions and have led lives which were themselves miracles.

Nor is the first view of the Abbey an anti-climax to this impressive prelude.

The sharp peaked roofs of the long line of château-like buildings, recalling those of the older portion of Fontainebleau, are backed against a bleak escarpment of naked rock (for the vast belt of dark green forest lies for the most part far beneath), and the serrated silhouette of grey mass behind the monastery seems to repeat and intensify its pointed roofs. It is as though another château, of giants or demigods, held the Abbey as a nursling in its embrace, protecting but not imprisoning it;

MONASTERY OF LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE.
By permission of Neurdein Frères

for the range sinks suddenly to give a magnificent view of "the Grand Som," whose white glacier glitters like a staircase to heaven.

Gradually the potency of this marvellous environment restored the mind of the novice Aloysius to its normal poise, and the strenuous labour of felling trees contributed to his physical cure. But his superior, Dom Jerome, who agonised over every soul in his care "until Christ should be formed in it," was not satisfied with the spiritual attitude of his ward. He could see that he was fundamentally unchanged, his calm was merely self-control, and beneath the surface love and hatred still burned like fires in a smouldering volcano.

The ascent of the Grand Som was permitted once a month to every member of the community. "For the prospect from its summit," says a Carthusian writer, "of dome rising beyond dome like an encampment of archangels, rarely failed to fill the beholder with heavenly ecstasy."

Aloysius climbed the mountain more frequently than his associates, but experienced no religious transports. He confessed to Dom Jerome that had Saint Bruno, instead of fleeing from the world, sought a spot in which

his heart must find loneliness most intolerable and cry out most passionately for its beloved he could not have made a better choice.

"You are still self-centred, my son," said the General kindly. "You are absorbed in your own grief. Nothing can extricate you from that slough but a contemplation of the sufferings of the Saviour."

Aloysius performed mechanically the penances imposed upon him. The *Via Crucis* and midnight vigils before the Crucified left him alike with dry eyes and a heart of stone. Dom Jerome was disappointed, but not disheartened. Another chord remained to be touched, that of human sympathy, and Aloysius was sent to minister in a hospice for lepers. But the loathsome objects which he saw there filled him with such revolt against a Deity who could permit such hideous suffering that Dom Jerome hastily remanded him to his wood-chopping. The heart of the reverend Father in God was filled with acute sadness, for he had now exhausted all the remedies in his pharmacopœia for the cure of souls; but at this very juncture he noted the change which he had longed for in the demeanour of his ward, and wondered as to its cause, until the monk in charge of the timber-

cutting made his report. He grieved to say that he had discovered Aloysius seated by the side of a young goatherd, showing him how to play upon his Pan pipes. He further explained that he had watched the offender unseen, and that Aloysius had kept the *letter* of the rule of silence, not speaking to the lad, but teaching him by patient pantomime how to evoke tuneful strains from his rustic instrument, and his lesson ended had left him with the prescribed Carthusian greeting, "*Memento mori*," accompanied by a shockingly playful pat upon the shoulder.

To the surprise of the monk, his superior had not only condoned this breach of discipline, but had ordered him to pass over any similar offence.

Scarcely was the General alone before he opened with trembling eagerness a small closet in the wall. It contained a few relics of Saint Bruno, the plan of the monastery believed to have been communicated to him in a vision at Rome, and a still more revered object carefully wrapped in a linen cloth. Saint Bruno when locating the site of the monastery had followed strains of celestial music, and on the spot where the corner-stone of his chapel had been laid the workmen had

found a flageolet. It was this instrument which Dom Jerome now regarded reverently. There was nothing to mark it as supernatural; it was an ordinary ebony *flute à bec* with six silver keys, and as the General cautiously breathed into the mouthpiece the tones came true and sweet, for it was in perfect condition. He sank upon his knees beseeching Saint Bruno to bless the design which he had formed, and hiding the flageolet within his robe, strode rapidly from the monastery.

That evening, Fadet the goatherd was overjoyed at finding the flageolet on the hard pallet of his lonely cabin. He carried it to Aloysius on the following day, taxing him with the gift. The novice shook his head, for it was a surprise to him as well, but the General of the stern order smiled as the notes of the instrument were borne to him from the neighbouring pines.

In teaching Fadet Aloysius had found an interest outside of himself, and the General knew that his salvation was assured.

And now into this haven of peace, this sanctuary of a rescued soul, the fiend who had wrought so much misery had penetrated, and the fires of hell, which Dom Jerome fondly be-

Saint Bruno Receiving the Design for the Monastery of La Grande Chartreuse.

From the painting by E. Le Sueur in the Louvre.
(By permission of Dornach, Paris.)

lieved had been extinguished in the heart of his spiritual child, flamed forth with new intensity.

In the narrowest portion of the gorge up which winds the road to La Grande Chartreuse there shoots almost perpendicularly from the precipice a pinnacle of rock called the Needle. It would seem that some god had cleft it from the equally vertical wall of cliff, to afford the scantiest possible opening for the road.

This opening, the Needle's Eye, the monks had barred by double iron gates, capped by a defending tower (no longer existing, but described in ancient manuscripts as the "*Fortalacium de l'Œillet*,"—"The Little Fort of the Eyelet").

The fortified port was dwarfed to insignificance by the tremendous obelisk at its side, which dominated it by a hundred and twenty feet.

The surest footed chamois had never scaled the sides of this natural spire and the eagles built securely in its crevices.

Dom Jerome met the invading force at this point, hauling up the iron portcullis for the troops and bidding them pass freely on to the monastery in whose refectory Aloysius had

spread an ample collation. But Des Adrets halted his command and gazed fascinated at the Needle.

"It is as if some steeple had run away from its cathedral," he said to one of his officers. "Ah, Biron, if I could once see a man leap from that height!"

"Inconceivable, Baron, for first the man would have to climb to the top, a manifestly impossible feat."

The Baron sighed assent, and his eye fell upon the Carthusian General and the monk Aloysius standing in the Eyelet. "Welcome to our poor house," said Dom Jerome, bowing deeply, but Aloysius stood the straighter, with folded arms, staring at the Baron.

"How much farther must I ride before I reach it?" asked the Baron with an oath. "Have you nothing to drink here? I have the thirst of the damned."

"I anticipated as much," said Aloysius, "and have brought of our best elixir. A cask of green Chartreuse is broached at the monastery, but this flask of our oldest and best I selected especially for your excellency."

As he spoke, Aloysius filled a glass with such nervousness that Des Adrets's brows drew together in a scowl of suspicion.

THE NEEDLE.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

APPROACH TO THE MONASTERY OF LA GRANDE CHARTREUSE.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

"Prepared especially for me," he said mockingly. "Are you willing, young man, to drink my health in this elixir which you have so amiably concocted?"

Aloysius bowed and poured a second glass. "If your excellency will join me, I will drink with pleasure," he replied. "I prepare no cup for another which I am not willing to share."

Dom Jerome's hand closed upon his arm with a grip like that of iron. "Pardon me, Baron," he said, "but you come in such unusual guise that I can well understand your demand for a guarantee of your safety in our hospitality. Let me have the honour of acting as your cup-bearer and of tasting this liqueur." He lifted the glass to his lips, gazing at the same time earnestly at Aloysius, who answered his unspoken question frankly.

"You may drink it in safety, reverend Father," he said. "I wrestled through that temptation, and it is not poisoned."

But Des Adrets heard only the last word. "Poisoned!" he repeated. "I thought so. You seem uncommonly willing to die, and you shall have your wish."

"Baron," besought Dom Jerome, "you misunderstand. See, I drink the liqueur with

impunity. This young man is innocent of any attempt to harm you; and yet he has already experienced your severity. He was among those who leapt into the Rhone at Valence. You will not condemn him twice to death."

"I died twice that night," said Aloysius, "when the one I loved died in my arms. Let him do his worst; he can but send me to her."

"You shall have your choice, or at least your chance," Des Adrets replied with a sneer. "That is a pretty church spire you have yonder, but it lacks its finial. If you can set upon its summit the iron cross which I see upon this gate you shall be untouched by me or by my troops when you come down."

"'T is a fair proposition," approved Captain Biron. "If your life is worth anything to you, young man, earn it."

Aloysius looked at his superior and smiled bitterly. "Pray for my soul, my General," he said simply, and prepared for the task.

A soldier accompanied him to the convent for such things as he deemed requisite, and he returned promptly to the spot. Placing himself on the side of the Needle farthest from the monastery he drew from his bosom a pigeon which he had taken from her nest, and attach-

ing one end of a bobbin of thread to a foot, let her go free. The bird shot up into the air, circled once, and then flew toward its home. "Shoot her," Aloysius cried to the crossbowmen, and the pigeon fell dead at their feet. Running to the spot, Aloysius took up the thread and pulled it steadily. It was of stout flax, and had fallen, as he had calculated that it would, across a narrow ledge near the point of the Needle. He had fastened a stout cord with a slip-noose to the thread, and skilfully manipulating the line, the noose presently encircled the upper portion of the pinnacle, and was pulled taut and firm. It would bear his weight, and with a pouch slung over his shoulder containing the iron cross and some tools, he began the perilous ascent.

As he pressed his bare feet to the slippery rock and grasped the cord, he turned to Dom Jerome. "I confess, my General, *peccavi!*"

"And I grant you absolution," the other replied; but as a look of ecstasy illumined the penitent's face, Dom Jerome hastily added: "I absolve and remit all sins of your past life up to this present; but when you have completed your task and fixed the sign of our redemption on that height, add not the crime of suicide to your account, but come down to

your duties and your penance, and God be with you."

Steadily, carefully, Aloysius climbed, now aiding himself by the rope, now daringly making his way without its help, scaring the eagles from their eyries and sending particles of stone crashing with startling reverberations into the ravine below. He was watched in utter silence until he reached the summit, and the faint clink of his hammer was heard upon the rock. Then the cross rose, and the Huguenot soldiers for the first and last time in their lives threw up their caps and cheered the sacred symbol, or rather the achievement of the daring artisan.

Then steadying himself by the cross with one arm Aloysius stood upright and looked, not downward, but as though he saw a vision into heaven.

Des Adrets leaped and capered like a madman. "Jump!" he cried. "Jump, and be damned!"

Dom Jerome extended his arms with an appealing cry,—"My son, my son!" but Aloysius neither heard nor saw them, for he was wavering under the influence of a great temptation. It was the same which the arch fiend dared to present to the sinless Christ.

The vertigo in the brain of the dazed monk reinforced the desperation in his heart, and he heard all around him the mocking voices: "Cast thyself down. Cast thyself down!" He wavered for an instant, and seemed to be preparing himself for the fatal leap, when clear and sweet a strain of music thrilled through the air, piercing it like an arrow, and reaching the dizzy brain of the man upon the Needle's point.

"Play! play! Blow for your life, Fadet!" cried Dom Jerome; and the goatherd blew, his heart in his throat, the notes penetratingly shrill, but discordant now, for he was too excited to mind his stops.

Aloysius heard the yearning message and stood transfixed. He had thought himself unloved and unneeded in the world, but those false notes told him the truth,—little Fadet both loved and needed his teacher. With that revelation his own life became precious to him, and with calm determination he started upon a descent infinitely more perilous than the upward climb.

Des Adrets, realising that Aloysius had decided to attempt to retrace his steps, burst into a volley of oaths.

"Shoot him!" he commanded, but not a

man stirred to execute the order, and Captain Biron saluted.

"So please you, sir, it will not be necessary. He can never reach the ground in safety."

"You are right," Des Adrets admitted; "and it is more exciting to watch the fool try the impossible. There, look! look! The cord has been worn through by that sharp rock. He is falling! No, by the Mass, he has lodged in that pine! He is still scrambling down! I have not had such enjoyment in a year, for he is doomed. He has wrenched his wrist, and it hangs limp. Ah! At last he has leapt!"

But the distance was trifling, and Aloysius, landing on marshy ground, was unhurt.

"Shoot him! Shoot him!" yelled Des Adrets, as the novice staggered to his feet.

"Baron, he has our word," protested Biron. "We are jointly responsible for what is done on this expedition, and the word of Biron at least shall not be broken in the presence of his soldiers. Sergeant, give the order to march to the monastery. All of the Chartreuse liqueur is not poisoned, I fancy. If the Reverend Father-General will oblige us still further as cup-bearer and taster we may find other entertainment as good in its way as the performance of yonder acrobat."

Dom Jerome waved his hand to Aloysius, or so the latter imagined; but when he reached the Gate of the Eyelet there was no one waiting to receive him but Fadet.

"The General bade me take you to the cave where I pen the goats," sobbed the boy, hysterical with joy; "and we are to remain hidden there till he comes for us."

"And we shall have enough to do," replied Aloysius, masking his emotion. "You must practise many times that jig which you blubbered forth while I was upon the Needle, for you played it very vilely, little Fadet, very vilely indeed."

CHAPTER X

FLEUR D'ÉPINE

A LEGEND OF THE BOYHOOD OF SAINT LOUIS

(From undiscovered memoirs of the Sieur de Joinville)

CERTES it is a fair Abbey, that of Saint Denis, and a merry life as a lad I led therein as *pensionnaire* of its school for noble youths. Here for a time my late royal master, Louis IX. of France, then a lad of eleven years, was my schoolfellow, and here we contracted the intimacy which later blossomed on his part into a confidence overweeningly disproportioned to my talents, but not to my affection.

True, in those days I made no display of the love I really bore him, but contrariwise, as the manner of boys is, for I was a sad scapegrace, and he with his seraphic

beauty and spiritual nature was even then too heavenly-minded for this present evil world.

I mind me in this connection of an adventure which threw all the monastery into a nine days' wonder and well-nigh cost the life of a very worthy man.

It had to do in the first place with the theft of that masterpiece of the goldsmith's art, the vase which the Abbot Suger left to the monastery; a vase of porphyry, mounted with the golden head and wings and claws of some great bird. It was commonly held to figure forth the cock of St. Peter, the same that by its crowing waked that cowardly saint to repentance, and yet it bore no so living a likeness to such a fowl.

This precious and venerated object had its place upon the high altar of the church beneath the oriflamme, the pennon of the Abbey; and there lacked not great hue and cry when upon a certain morning it was discovered to be missing. The most diligent investigation availed nothing, for though a window in the apse was broken, the orifice was too high and too small for a robber to have effected an entrance thereby, and all the doors were bolted.

When all the *pensionnaires* were convened and adjured to confess if we knew aught concerning the disappearance of this treasure, Prince Louis arose and told how he had seen the sacred cock take flight from the altar of itself, soaring through the opening in the window, and that he following had witnessed it make covert in the bosom of a stranger at the foot of the Abbey garden.

This statement was so extraordinary that those who heard, knowing that the conscientious child would have died rather than have told a lie, had no other resource than to believe that he had dreamed what he related. Still, the vision coming so apt upon the disappearance of the vase, the Abbot questioned him closely.

"At what time was it, sweet Prince, that thou sawest the bird fly away?"

"At midnight, my Lord, for the bell had but struck the hour."

"And how couldst thou, in thy bed, have seen what passed in the church?"

"So please you, my Lord, I was not in my bed, but had come into the church, following an apparition of the blessed Saint Denis, who awakened me and bade me do so."

The Abbot shook his head. "Dear child,"

THE BUILDING OF THE CHURCH.
From an old print.

THE VASE OF ABBOT SUGER.
From *L'Art Gothique* by Louis Gonse.

he asked, "what said the saint, and how looked his features?"

"He was all in white, my Lord, but he had no face, for thou knowest that it was after his head was chopped off that he came to this Abbey. His voice came from his midst, and he bade me follow the cock of Saint Peter, for beneath the spot where it would alight I should find buried the true and holy crown of thorns."

"And didst thou find it, thou blessed innocent?"

"Nay, my Lord, but the bird hovered over the great eglantine by the garden wall, which hath doubtless sprung from the sacred briar-wreath, and there in its shadow awaiting my coming was one of my human thorns."

"What meanest thou, sweet Prince, by thy human thorns?"

"My wretched subjects, Sir Abbot, whom I must change to roses, as Brother Ambrosius taught me in the legend of *The Eglantine of Caiphas.*"

"Tell me the legend, dear child," commanded the Abbot, "for I mind it not."

"At the time of the passion of our Lord," said the Prince, in his sweet child's voice, "there grew in Jerusalem, in the garden of

the high-priest, a wild-rose tree, like unto the one in our garden, save that it had never blossomed.

"It was from its briary stalks that the brutal soldiers plaited the crown of thorns. But when the eglantine drank the precious blood a new sap swelled within its savage veins and a thorn changed to flower. And even as the petals of the rose caressed the face of our Lord there was borne to his ear the confession of the penitent thief, that human thorn changed to a rose of Paradise.

"And ever since whenever a soul is saved, a thorn is changed to a rose on the briary branches of the eglantine wherever it may grow.

"Brother Ambrosius told me, moreover, that a King's wicked subjects were his thorns, that for the most part they were wicked because they were wretched, and that if I made my people happier, and so better, in good time all the eglantines in France would become thornless."

"Brother Ambrosius hath distraught thy sensitive mind with his mystical legends," the Abbot declared angrily. "Sweet Prince, it is but a dream. There was no man, and the bird flew not."

"Nay, my Lord, it was no dream, for Jean de Joinville was in the church and saw the cock fly. He followed me also to the garden, for I heard him crouching along behind the hedges, and he saw Fleur d'Épine—for that is the new name which I gave to the man who hath the bird, seeing that he hath promised to be a naughty thorn no longer, but a rose."

"Jean de Joinville, stand forth," commanded the Abbot; and sorely against my will, with a hang-dog face and a thumping heart, I obeyed.

"Didst thou, Jean, indeed, see this wonder?" asked my inquisitor.

"Yea, my Lord Abbot," I answered haltingly; "it is all as the Prince hath told thee."

"How camest thou in the church?"

"I was wakeful and followed Prince Louis."

"And why hast thou not volunteered thy testimony before?"

"Because none would have believed me."

"The tale is indeed well-nigh incredible, but speak the truth and fear not. How looked this man, this Fleur d'Épine? Nay, ere thy testimony is taken on that point the Prince may retire, for we would see whether your descriptions tally."

So I told the Abbot the truth concerning

the man, whom I had indeed seen: that he was swarthy, ragged, and unshorn, and of brawny build, that he carried a knotty club, and so formidable was his appearance that I trembled at first lest he would brain the royal child; but that suddenly this wild creature dropped his bludgeon and sank upon his knees, and, mistaking Louis for some saint, he cried, "Lord have mercy upon me a sinner."

I related further how the Prince greeted him kindly, and that the man confessed that he had come to rob the poultry-yard of the monastery of a little gamecock named Dagobert, which Brother Herluin, keeper of the fowls, had hidden, and which he had entered in cocking-mains to the scandal of the Abbey.

This my testimony was, on the further examination of the Prince, confirmed in every particular, and we each separately deposed how Fleur d'Épine had declared that he was desperate with hunger, and that his father and mother also must starve unless some miracle were wrought in their behalf.

"Then," continued the Prince, "I knew why the cock had flown to him of its own volition, and I bade him seize it as it fluttered

Twelfth Century Glass, Abbey of St. Denis.

From a water colour of the window by John Sanford Humphreys.
(Note the curious portrait of the Abbot Suger with inscription.)

above his head, for that this was the blessed bird of Saint Peter, and if entered in the cocking-main instead of Dagobert, doubtless it would vanquish all contestants."

"What said the man to this?" the Abbot asked of me; and I told how he had at first gaped as one astonished, and then clanging the metal work upon the stones, had said that it was fair brass, and the bird's belly a jug of stout red crockery, so that if the cock came not to life to fight, it might fetch somewhat from a dealer of old rags and iron.

I testified further that the Prince urged him to venture upon the miracle, and that thrusting the vase into his bosom, the man made off over the wall, the Prince returning to the dormitory with the exalted mien of one who trod upon air.

"By the mouth of two witnesses shall every word be established," quoth the Abbot. "The ground also, which I have carefully examined, hath been trampled, the eglantine and its trellis broken, and footprints are discernible on the moist earth outside the wall. This, therefore, was no dream or vision. The bird of a verity flew, and the man who whistled it to him must have done so by some devil's arts, and have been a sorcerer.

"It is by no means unlikely that he will carry out his boast of causing our venerated treasure to be animated by some imp of hell, which in this disguise will be invincible. The rogue shall be sought at every cock-pit and fête where lovers of this barbarous sport do congregate; and when apprehended he shall be burned for sorcery and sacrilege, for none save the King himself can deliver him from my hand."

When Prince Louis heard this, he wept exceedingly, for the King, his father, was absent in Provence, and was moreover not of a very tender heart, so that Fleur d'Épine stood in jeopardy of his life. Moreover, the Prince would not be convinced that his flower of the briar had gotten possession of the bird through sorcery, nor of a truth did I think so, nor was this the opinion of two of our young comrades, Geoffrey de Sargines and Pierre de Montreuil, who could have borne further testimony in this matter had they so dared.

"He was a very honest man," the Prince declared to us; "only he had been bred to no trade, and could do naught but teach young chicken-cocks to peck out each other's eyes. But verily if he can so train men he would make such a captain as I would fain have in

my army. It would be a wicked deed to burn this man, and it shall not be."

"It shall not be if I can hinder," I rejoined; "I will warn him of his danger,—but how, since we know not his true name nor his home?"

"We know his haunts," said Geoffrey de Sargines, "and if thou hadst not informed upon Brother Herluin he might have taken thee to the next cock-fight; but now is the sportive monk shut up under discipline."

"Perchance we can discover somewhat in his cell," suggested Pierre de Montreuil, who was always fertile in expedients. And there, in sooth, we found a calendar wherein the keeper of the poultry had marked the dates and places at which he had purposed to enter his little gamecock Dagobert.

The next contest was to take place at Argenteuil, and on that day, under pretence of a visit to my aunt, I got a holiday. My comrades aided me with their pocket money, and I arrived safely at my destination, putting up at a low tavern. But what was my mingled satisfaction and alarm to find, here publicly posted, a challenge to all the fighting-cocks of the world to combat with the miraculous cock of Saint Peter, which had slept

during the centuries, but would, as its owner believed, now awaken and vanquish all comers.

There was much incredulity and jesting among those who read the challenge, and many were ready to bet against the strange contestant, whereas only one man appeared to take the bets. Strange it was also that this man was a Jew, whom one would not have credited with belief in the story. As it appeared, he was a receiver of stolen goods, who had advanced Fleur d'Épine a certain sum to wager upon the bird, recognising it to be of value, and securing its possession in case the bets were lost.

But the cocking-main came not off, for while I sought for Fleur d'Épine with all diligence, the officers of the law sought for him also, and, hotter on the scent than I, seized him, showing the vase unabashed, and so dragged him back in chains to the jurisdiction of the Lord Abbot of Saint Denis.

The testimony of the Prince also availed him nothing, but on the contrary served to condemn the accused, seeing that Louis swore upon the rood that he recognised the prisoner as the man who had whistled to him the vase. Therefore the gentle Prince sobbed

and prayed the livelong night; and Geoffrey de Sargines and Pierre de Montreuil and I were in even sorrier case, for we had remorse upon our consciences.

But the next morning a swift courier brought tidings of weighty import to the Abbey, for King Louis VIII., father of our Prince, was dead in Auvergne upon his way home, having accomplished naught that was indispensable in all his life, save the begetting of so great a son.

It chanced that the news reached us as the Prince sat at the Gate of Charity dispensing loaves, and there had fallen upon their knees before him an aged couple, the father and mother of Fleur d'Épine, for they had come to beg for the life of their son.

"Stay you here a little space, while I talk with the Lord Abbot," Louis commanded. And, having heard all his Lordship had to say, Louis listened also to the letter of his mother, Queen Blanche, bidding him write out a list of his friends who should assist at his coronation at Rheims.

"Madame's behest shall be obeyed," quoth Louis; "and, my Lord Abbot, after thine own name I prithee place those of my best beloved comrades, Jean de Joinville, Geoffrey

de Sargines, and Pierre de Montreuil, and following theirs that of Fleur d'Épine, the poor man to whom I gave the vase of Suger."

"Nay," cried the Abbot, "what madness is this! Hast thou forgotten that yon vagabond lieth under sentence of death for sorcery and sacrilege?"

"Par die!" exclaimed Louis, "hast thou forgotten, Sir Abbot, that I am KING? Moreover, here is no sorcery, for I overheard the three friends whom I have named conversing in the dormitory in the darkness of the night, and charging themselves with sobs of penitence with a jest, which, through thy severity, hath well-nigh wrought the death of this my very faithful subject."

"What jest?" demanded the Lord Abbot, angrily, and, emboldened with the consciousness that Louis would be our safeguard, we made a virtue of our necessity, and confessed our mad prank. For our unregenerate natures had revolted against the abnormal piety of the Prince, when he had declared to us his intention of one day going in quest of the holy crown of thorns; and Geoffrey de Sargines, wrapped in a sheet, had personated Saint Denis; while Pierre de Montreuil (even then most ingenious in all mechanical con-

trivances) had led a wire from the high altar to the eglantine, on which by means of a pulley the bird of Suger had been made to travel, flapping its wings in grotesque caricature of flight. Our intention being to lead the too credulous Prince straight into the briar-bush, and when he had gotten himself well scratched to rise up and revile him.

Our plots were well laid, but, as I have since learned in the greater affairs of statecraft, there often come in unknown factors which cause the most plausible schemes to have other outcomes than those which they who devised them foresaw. It was even so with our pranking. The man, Fleur d'Épine, was the unknown factor, for who could have foreseen that he would have chosen this night to rob the Abbey hen-roosts, or that all these perversities should have worked together as I have written out for our own befooling? When we had confessed our malefaction, Louis cried in triumph, "Thou seest, Sir Abbot, that Fleur d'Épine's only fault was belief in my assurance that God would work a miracle in his behalf, and in that I find him a better Christian than thou."

"Pardon, my Liege," cried the Abbot, upon his knees, "pardon me that I have

spoken thoughtlessly and pridefully. As for these naughty varlets who have wrought all this mischief, they shall smart for their misdeeds."

"That shall they not, my Lord Abbot, for I bear them no malice, since they meant none. Listen, therefore, to the first commands of King Louis IX. These my friends shall be well appointed to offices about my person, and the man who has suffered on our account, the doughty and valiant Fleur d'Épine, I do now create Captain of my body-guard, and he shall bear the oriflamme before me what time I go forth to the Holy Land, and shall there wear out his lustiness upon the Saracens."

So he spake, and so it was done. And what further is there for me to say in this place, seeing that of the King's public life, his acts, and his crusades I have written elsewhere with prolixity? All the world knoweth, moreover, how the King obtained that precious relic, the true Crown of Thorns, and caused to be built for it by Pierre de Montreuil (who became his architect) that most fitting reliquary, the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. Neither did he forget his human thorns, but founded for them many leproseries and hospi-

tals; nor was he unmindful of the Abbey which he loved, but completed it after the plans of Abbot Suger.

And we three, his boyhood friends, loved him as our own souls; the valiant knight Geoffrey de Sargines protecting him in the day of battle, as Louis himself said, "even as a good servant protects his lord's tankard from the flies."

So also did the very valiant Captain Fleur d'Épine make his breast at all times the King's buckler, dying at last transfixed with many spears at the ill-fated battle of Mansourah what time Louis was taken prisoner by the Infidels.

CHAPTER XI

THE GREEN DRAGON OF FÉCAMP

IT all came about through that sly rogue, Brother Hilarius.

Merry and ingenious, his society was not alone the delight of his fellow-monks, but he had brought the Abbey of St. Ouen fame and wealth by his incomparable skill as scene painter and maker of properties for the mystery-plays, which were annually enacted in the great "Place" of Rouen. His infernos were so realistic and so melodramatic that they were held in higher esteem than the hells of any other dramatic company either secular or religious, while he had a complete monopoly in every species of loathly monster, from ordinary green dragons to his unapproachable fire-belching Beelzebub. So terrific was the appearance of this hobgoblin

that ladies of nervous temperament were warned in advance to leave the auditorium, and at its sight hardened sinners had been known to cry out for mercy, and promise amendment.

It will be readily understood that much could be pardoned so invaluable a member of the brotherhood, but Hilarius presumed upon his indispensability, and his manners becoming insufferable, the Abbot saw that it would be necessary to discipline him, and condemned him by way of penance to retire for a season to the small priory of Valmont on the Normandy coast, not far from the Benedictine Abbey of Fécamp.

Hilarius wisely employed his banishment in painting scenery for the approaching mystery play of Saint Anthony, a barn having been granted him as an atelier and his tools sent from Rouen.

It was during one of the intervals of his work, while strolling in a neighbouring field which belonged to the Abbey of Fécamp, that a bit of good fortune befell him in the discovery of a small deposit of what appeared to him to be cinnabar, from which he well knew vermilion could be fabricated. He trembled with delight, for vermilion was a

very expensive colour; so costly indeed was it that it was only doled out to the illuminators, while he was obliged to content himself with duller reds for his lurid scene-painting. Here was enough, not alone for his own artistic needs, but a valuable source of revenue to his Abbey. He immediately notified the Abbot of Saint Ouen of his discovery, and received a prompt reply to his letter.

It was indeed a pity, wrote his superior, that so rich a deposit should be in the possession of a rival monastery, and Hilarius was directed to interrogate Orosius Abbot of Fécamp as to the possibility of purchasing the land. But though the good monk had no idea of the particular treasure hid in his field and coveted by the Abbot of St. Ouen, he had his own secret reason for not desiring to part with the meadow, for here, and nowhere else in France, grew certain wild plants which he had mingled with garden herbs and distilled into a liqueur so adorable that he believed it worthy to be presented to the King himself.

Finding that the land could not be purchased by fair means, Hilarius determined to employ a trick. He ascertained that the monks held their deed of the Abbey from the

OLD ABBEY CHURCH OF FÉCAMP.

Seigneur de Bailleul, and that it had been granted for a peculiar service.

Though the Seigneur feared neither God nor man he was horribly afraid of hobgoblins. His castle was at a considerable distance from Fécamp, at the foot of a range of hills called the *Falaise du Serpent*, on account of a tunnel which still pierces it and was supposed to be the burrow of a hideous monster, who was often heard bellowing in his subterranean caverns, and who sometimes came forth to feast on human prey.

Jean de Bailleul had called upon the Abbot of Fécamp to exorcise this dragon, and the brotherhood had followed their spiritual father into the bowels of the earth, chanting masses with chattering teeth. Nothing had been seen of the creature either at that time or since,—and even the noise of his snoring had ceased, so that the monks could fairly claim to have performed their part of the bargain.

When Jean de Bailleul learned that the Abbot of St. Ouen was willing to pay him a large sum for the Abbey lands he regretted his unaccustomed generosity, but the grant had been legally made, and there was no repudiating it.

Hilarius saw the disappointed covetousness

in the eyes of the Seigneur, and suggested craftily:

"If the monks of Fécamp of their own accord ask to exchange their present seat for another less valuable in some other part of Normandy, will you not sell it to us?"

"Most certainly," replied Jean de Bailleul; "rid me of those clowns, and the estate shall be secured to your Abbot."

All this time Orosius, quite unconscious of the machinations of the wicked, behind the locked doors of his laboratory was industriously concocting the divine nectar which he trusted would make the reputation of his Abbey, as indeed it did. So seductive was the cordial that, from frequent tasting, to be sure that it was correctly mingled, he had a vision of serpents such as Dante saw and some of the old sculptors wrought in stone about the doors of churches. The Abbot knew that such visions were not infrequently sent by the devil to admonish drunkards, and he wisely resolved upon radical reform, pursuing a *régime* of abstinence with such heroism that he filled flask after flask with his adorable liqueur without ever allowing a drop of it to pass his lips. He would never have confessed to his visions had it not been that

other members of the community were about this time affected by similar ones.

Andrew, the gatekeeper, had heard from the monks of the Priory of Valmont that the great serpent which the Abbot Orosius had exorcised had been seen making its way toward the coast. The monk gave a most thrilling account of the number of unfortunate victims which the creature had devoured. "Heaven forfend that he should come our way!"

Soon other alarming rumours were heard. One peasant had seen a monster prowling around the ateliers of Valmont at night. Its eyes shot fire, and it left a terrible stench of brimstone in its wake. As yet it had devoured no human being in the vicinity, but pigs and poultry had been carried off, and there was no telling what it might do.

Some of the monks at Fécamp had been in the procession which followed their Abbot into the loathly lair, and they doubted not but the monster, feeling a grudge against their good Abbot, would be likely to revenge himself upon his helpless flock.

One night the entire community heard a most terrific roaring, and, shaking in their dormitory, not one of them dared sally forth

to investigate the ominous sounds. On the morrow the track of the serpent was plainly visible around the Abbey. Orosius sprinkled it with holy water, and when the roaring was heard again, made the sign of the Cross and plucked up courage enough to look out at the window. But the sight which he saw filled him with such terror that he fell backward in a faint.

A monstrous green dragon, with eyes like balls of fire, was rumbling and grunting along the avenue which led to the entrance of the Abbey. The creature paused here, and belching forth a torrent of sulphurous flame, which would certainly have set fire to the building had it not been built of stone, was distinctly heard to utter the ominous words, "I thirst, I thirst for blood!"

After having reduced the occupants of the Abbey to the extremity of mortal terror, the dragon ambled slowly away to the accompaniment of peals of fiendish laughter.

The next morning the monks begged their Abbot on their knees to flee with them, but to their surprise they found him calm and resolute.

"I shall not abandon my post of duty," he declared, "and since this hellish monster thirsts I will give him to drink."

A cry of dismay went up from the little company, for they believed that their Abbot had resolved to sacrifice himself for their sakes and to go out alone to meet the dragon.

"Nay," he replied, "the foul fiend shall have a beverage far more delicious than my poor blood. Hasten to carry the great soup kettle to the avenue. I will fill it with an elixir which cannot fail to tempt his nostrils and to soften his heart."

Apparently the good monk had not overestimated the qualities of his cordial, for though the monster overturned the kettle in his first blind rush toward the Abbey, he seemed either to have some difficulty in rolling the heavy obstacle from his path, or the perfume of the spilled liqueur exercised a fascination upon him. At all events he remained for a long time on the spot, and the anxiously watching monks thought they discerned shadowy forms, doubtless those of devils, at first moving cautiously, and later dancing about it in the obscurity of the tall hornbeam hedges.

At length the creature retired unsteadily, and a great relief filled the hearts of the monks of Fécamp.

But in the morning as they scrutinised the

spot where the apparition had been seen they found the soaked ground trampled and marked by human feet, instead, as they had expected, by the hoof-prints of fiends, and a light began to break in upon their mental darkness. It was possible—nay, probable—that they were the victims of some scurvy trick. They filled the caldron again and waited, this time not with fear and prayer, but with clubs and staves.

The dragon returned, but as the door of the Abbey was thrown open, and the light of all its lamps shone upon it, the beast attempted to turn tail. Too late! A dozen stout monks were upon it, twenty-four strong arms belaboured it to the sound of derisive laughter, until from its painted canvas sides there issued cries for mercy, and there crawled from the broken effigy two bedraggled men, who writhed and cursed and threatened and implored, but were relentlessly manacled and dragged before the Abbot.

One of the rascals was recognised as the scoundrel Hilarius, but what was the astonishment of the community to find in the other their landlord, the mighty Seigneur de Bailleul. For Hilarius had taken him into his confidence, and the cowardly bully (who

would have died of terror had he met unwarned the mechanical "fire-belching Beelzebub") considered the joke such a rare one that he insisted in participating in carrying it out.

The tables were turned, and the Abbot Orosius made his own terms with his crestfallen prisoners. Hilarius was allowed his liberty, leaving Beelzebub as a trophy to Fécamp, where he remains in chains to this day; and Jean de Bailleul was glad to purchase the silence of the monks by assuring them the possession of their lands for ever, in return for an annual offering of a cauldron of the precious elixir.

The story leaked out at last along with the flowing cordial at his own board.

"It was the best bargain I ever made," he declared; "for what could the Abbot of St. Ouen have given me comparable to this adorable liqueur of the Benedictines of Fécamp?"

CHAPTER XII

MADEMOISELLE DE FOLLEVILLE

AN EPISODE IN THE HISTORY OF THE ABBEY OF MONT SAINT MICHEL, AS RELATED BY THE HUGUENOT SOLDIER, RAOUL DE RABLOTIÈRE

I

MOST beautiful of my early visions—most terrible of all the memories of a life spent for the greater part in warfare—the most potent influence in all my life,—that is what the Abbey stands for to me.

And yet I have spent but one hour within its walls, an hour which showed me hell and gave me heaven; but patience—you shall have the story in due order.

You know the spot, a rocky pinnacle, an island when the tide is in, and when it is out more dangerous of approach from the treachery of moving quicksands. Not unfittingly did they choose as its patron saint the

STATUE OF THE MONK VINCELLI, INVENTOR OF THE BENEDICTINE ELIXIR.

By permission of Neurdein Frères.

commander of the hosts of the archangels. Huguenot though I am, I could almost believe that Saint Michel has ever hovered with his legions above the Mount, and that he garrisoned it not alone with angels, but with devils. For, even before successive fighting Abbots girdled the peak with its cincture of walls, and sentinelled them with friars who knew their manual of arms better than their breviary, the Prince of the Power of the Air, whom Saint Michel chained, summoned his tempests to protect the Abbey. *Saint Michel au Peril du Mer* it has always been, but never in peril from man. Through the century of war with England, when all the west of France was lost, Mont Saint Michel remained invincibly French, and now that our Henri of Navarre had swept the League from the same region, the monks of the fortress Abbey chanted their masses in impudent security.

It was in vain that the Bearnais had set the ablest officer in his command, my lifelong friend, Gabriel de Montgomery, the task of reducing Mont Saint Michel, and that he had cut off all succour for the Abbey from the landward side; swift-sailing sloops from Saint Malo, manned by descendants of those Malouin

corsairs who had delivered the Mount from the English in the Hundred Years' War, would elude the vigilance of our harbour officials, and bring the beleaguered monks provisions.

"I will make myself master there yet," Montgomery growled; "there and in one other quarter that I wot of. The Abbey is like a provoking coquette. It beckons me on and holds me at a distance continually, but I will not be so played with by a fortress of mere stone. No, nor defied by a pretty woman who gives herself the airs of that same Abbey."

I knew better than to ask her name then, sure that I would learn it in good time and confident, too, that Montgomery would make good his boasting, and that the citadel and the woman would alike yield to his rough wooing.

Meantime I came to know the Abbey in many aspects. I had sailed around it in reconnoitring trips, had felt the charm of its flashing attractiveness from the seaward side, and had heard the chiming of its bells and the chanting of the angelus borne softly landward by the sea-breeze.

It was more varied in its moods than a coquette, for there were times when it struck

me with the chill terror of the supernatural. And this was not when the waves were dashing shoreward like mad horsemen to cut it off from all approach, but in the gathering twilight, when the tides were out, and only a pool here and there red as blood upon the brown sands reflected the afterglow. Then the fog came in and wreathed the base of the Mount with fantastic curling shapes, like ghosts joining hands in a mysterious dance, who waved and beckoned and seemed to call, "Come, come to your death, under the shifting quicksands."

At such times as these Mont Saint Michel seemed to me so intolerably sad and sinister that I would liefer have received orders to any desperate fight in a fair field than to have known, as we did later, that the fortress was to be ours simply for the walk across those haunted sands.

But before that ordeal came, with its tragical consequences, much was to happen of supreme moment both to France and to me, for it was the midsummer of 1588, the year of the coming of the Spanish Armada for the conquest of England, and the summer in which I first saw Mademoiselle de Folleville.

Therefore, if I now make a divergence from

Mont Saint Michel, be assured that it is but a circuitous road for the necessary relation of certain events instrumental in bringing us to the Abbey; I having never learned the craft of those romancers whose tales fly as straight to their end as an arrow to a target.

On this summer then the entire coast of Normandy was patrolled by Montgomery's men, for he was determined to carry out the orders of Henri of Navarre that no Spaniard should land on French soil or receive help of any kind from Frenchmen. The Comte de Montgomery, who had his hands filled by the task of keeping the Saint Malo fisher fleet shut up within their harbour, and so from aiding the Spaniards, deputed to me the inspection of that portion of the Norman coast which lies between Cherbourg and Honfleur. I had instructions to make my headquarters at the little hamlet of Lion-sur-Mer; not from the fact that there was any likelihood that an incursion might be expected here, but because my friend was desirous of impressing the ladies of the château with his solicitude for their welfare.

"I must confess," the Count admitted to me, "that though I have long wooed her, Mademoiselle de Folleville has never granted

me any very assuring proofs of her favour. She is a tantalising little witch, endowed with more than her share of coquetry; and yet I fancy that she might love me were it not that she is a bigoted Catholic. I depend upon you, my dear Raoul, to dissipate her prejudices. I have in this letter begged her widowed mother, for the sake of their greater safety at this perilous time, to grant you and a few of your command the hospitality of their château.

"It is a delicate mission which I confide to you, my friend, but I count not only on your affection for me, but also not a little on your never-failing tact and your prepossessing personality."

"Nonsense," I answered, but flattered in despite of my disclaimer. "Nonsense as to the latter qualifications, but you may count on my devotion now and always."

I delivered my friend's letter immediately upon my arrival at Lion-sur-Mer; but its reception augured little for the success of my errand. The sour-faced old servitor who took it showed me into a long drawing-room, where I was left to cool my heels for a length of time which I might have regarded as insufferable but for a little incident that caused

it to pass very pleasantly. As I entered the salon I noticed at its farther end a pretty maid-servant in a somewhat peculiar plight.

She had climbed from the back of a chair to the mantel-shelf in order to wind a clock, which hung upon the wall above the mirror, and, startled by my entrance, had endeavoured rather precipitately to descend, but in so doing had pushed the chair beyond her reach. She now knelt with her face to the wall,—for the shelf was too narrow to permit her to turn,—and was making frantic efforts with one pretty slippered foot to find the back of the treacherous chair. She could see my reflection in the mirror, by whose frame she steadied herself, and I regret to confess that my face was convulsed with mirth.

I was ungallant doubtless in offering her no escape from her predicament, but she was far too bewitching in her rosy embarrassment to permit of any act on my part which would have ended the enforced tête-à-tête.

Her dress I cannot now recall. It was of some light material which then seemed to me appropriate to her condition, but marvellously becoming. The bodice, I remember, was cut square, and showed the lovely curves of her neck clustered with little rings of au-

burn hair, which escaped from a mob-cap, such as housemaids wear, and ladies also, as I have since learned, in their morning négligée.

I had hardly time to observe so much as this when, recovering her self-possession in spite of my quizzical stare, the little rogue made me a saucy *mou*. "Why do you not help me down, imbecile?" she asked with a pique which was as charming as her confusion.

Thus challenged, I promptly encircled the shapely waist with my great hands.

"No, not in that way, Monsieur Impertinence," she cried. "Give me the chair."

"And what will you give me in return?—a kiss?"

"Certainly not, insolent creature. The chair, I say, the chair!"

"Oh, very well, remain where you are," I replied, removing the chair a little farther and seating myself in it. "You make an uncommonly charming mantel ornament."

"Insufferable! François! François! *Au secours!*"

"If François is the name of the old tub of vinegar who admitted me," I rejoined, "I am happy to inform you that he is out of hearing, having gone in search of your mistress."

A slight spasm, entirely incomprehensible to me, shook the frame of my fair prisoner. Fearing that she would fall, I was at her side in an instant, and again held her securely.

"Unhand me," she insisted, but she was not angry for all her pretence, for to my astonishment the minx was choking with laughter.

"He is looking for my mistress!" she repeated. "If he had asked me her whereabouts he would have found her the sooner."

"It is fortunate for me," I replied, "that he did not ask you."

"Perhaps you are not so fortunate as you imagine," she retorted. "What is your business with my mistress, Monsieur Sauce-box?"

"I have come to pay her a visit."

"How so, when she does not know you."

"How do you know that, little one?"

The maid gave an involuntary gasp, but answered promptly:

"Because Mademoiselle is very particular about her acquaintances. Nothing is so revolting to her as freedom of manners. For instance, you would never dare hold her by the waist as you are holding me."

"Assuredly not, and as probably I would have no yearning to attempt it."

"So we have a different etiquette for fine ladies. I would have you to know that my mistress is very fond of me, and would turn you from the château if you offered me the least discourtesy."

"I mean you none, my dear, and, as I foresee that we are to be good friends, pray tell me your name. I am sure it is a pretty one."

"You may call me Coralie—if you stay; but I am by no means certain that you will be permitted to do so. Why have you come to Lion-sur-Mer?"

"To woo your mistress, and I want your help."

"You are frank, surely. Do you imagine that it would help your cause if she should discover you now, or that either of us would be pleased to know that you were making love to both?"

"I do not think she will mind," I ventured, "if you do not."

Again Coralie started, and this time so violently that she fell backward from the mantel plump into my arms.

"You are the most audacious man I ever met," she exclaimed, as she extricated herself from my embrace. "What do you mean by such an extraordinary remark?"

"I mean that it could be no concern of your mistress if I should fall in love with you, since I have come to woo her, not for myself, but for a friend."

"Indeed, this is very interesting. And who is this chicken-hearted friend who cannot do his own wooing? Tell me of him, but be franker with me than you will be with Mademoiselle. Does he really deserve her? Since he is as bashful as you are bold, is he as brave with men as he is timid with ladies?"

"Yes, to both questions. He is good and brave, noble-born and attractive of person. He is Count Gabriel de Montgomery."

Coralie's nose took an upward cock. "Nay, you may dislike him," I protested, "but you cannot despise him. His deeds prove his worth. He has made himself master of Normandy. Only the fortress Abbey of Mont Saint Michel still defies him, and he will be commander there ere long; and he will win your mistress, for these are his two great ambitions, and where he sets his heart he ever succeeds."

"He will never win Mademoiselle de Folleville," she persisted, "heretic that he is, and son of the man who killed the good King Henri II. by perfidy in the joust."

"Not by perfidy," I maintained. "It was an accident that the splintered lance pierced the King's brain; and it was Catherine de' Medici's unreasoning rancour which drove the father of my friend into affiliation with Coligny. His murder in cold blood after he was taken prisoner is the deed which his son Count Gabriel de Montgomery will never forgive. But for that heritage of revenge he would be a merciful man."

"You may cease your praises," said Coralie, "for here comes François," and she slipped quickly through the long window into the garden, as the old servitor shuffled in with the letter still on his tray.

"I cannot find Mademoiselle," he said, "though I have looked for her all over the château, and Madame, who is an invalid, bade me take the letter to her for an answer."

"François, come here," called Coralie from the garden, and the old man hurriedly responded to the summons. He returned presently, bringing the response of Mademoiselle de Folleville, which was to the effect that as the Comte de Montgomery was *for the present* military commander of the district, his right to billet soldiers on the householders was not

to be denied, and a room in the château was at my service, while my men could be lodged in the outbuildings.

Indignant as I was at this arrogance, I made no retort, trusting to the tact which my friend had vaunted to overcome the prejudices of my ungracious hostess. I was soon disillusioned, although I could not complain of my entertainment in any other respect. Madame and Mademoiselle de Folleville persistently denied me their company, even taking their meals in their own rooms, and giving me no opportunity to hypnotise them into receptivity of my friend's suit.

Personally I was quite indifferent to the airs or sulks of these grand dames, for if the mistresses were unkind, the maid was generous of her sprightly conversation. As I confessed to Coralie, though well born myself, I am always somewhat abashed in the presence of noble ladies. Etiquette and courtesy and all the artificialities of polite society are to me well-nigh insufferable; and I would not have reached so familiar a footing with Mademoiselle de Folleville in a score of years as that on which I found myself with her bewitching maid after our first half-hour of badinage. Nor was she such an empty-

headed minx as I may unwittingly have painted. For all her kittenish playfulness she knew how to keep my respect. If her tongue was free so were not her manners, and her spirits never ran away from her control. So that I oft fell to wondering that a girl of her lowly station should possess her innate refinement. I was sure, even before I obtained an inkling of her history, that somewhere in her ancestry there had been a strain of gentle blood. Standing one morning before a portrait of the late Leonce de Folleville, Seigneur of Lion-sur-Mer, I was struck by Coralie's resemblance to the old Baron. There was the same curling red-gold hair, the same green-blue eyes and elusive, mocking smile.

Only—and I strove to analyse the difference—I found Coralie's face charming, and I liked not overmuch the one upon the canvas.

And yet there was no cruelty or sensuality in the distinguished features, which might have been those of a statesman, so intellectual was the forehead, so crafty keen the slant, half-shut eyes. It was not the pointed red beard alone which gave the face a vulpine look; ruse and deceit were stamped in the insincere smile, and the sensitive nostrils were

drawn close in a hateful sneer,—as though in scorn of his victim.

Coralie's eyes frequently regarded me with an indefinable expression, which resembled this. It was as though she were acting a part, and glanced swiftly askance to see how her audience of one accepted it. At such moments a smile, sweet but derisive, curled her lips, and she would banter me unmercifully on my ill-success in wooing Mademoiselle for my friend.

"Nay, how can I succeed, since she will not see me?" I would reply.

"And if I bring about an interview," she would ask mischievously, "will you swear to me that you will not woo her for yourself?"

And when I protested that I would not so woo her, nay, not if she were an angel and I loved her with my whole heart, for that were disloyalty to my friend, she laughed and railed on me, saying that I had not the spirit of a mouse to make love to a woman either for myself or another.

I admitted that this might well be in the case of ladies of quality, of whom I ever stood in awe, but that I blessed Providence that had fenced her with no such barriers of rank and breeding, but had made her the sweetest

wild rose that ever grew in the hedges. All this badinage on her side was such pretty mockery, and she so evidently found her mischief diverting, that I loved her the more the less I understood her. But now, as I noted her resemblance to the Baron, her playfulness seemed an innate passion for deceit, with no other end in view than the mere pleasure of making a dupe.

"She is enough like him to be his daughter," I said, to myself as I fancied, for I had not marked that the old butler was standing behind me.

"She *is* his daughter," he answered.

I wheeled sharply. "It is time Monsieur knew the truth," he continued steadily. "If Mademoiselle chooses to pass for what she is not, I will be no party to the deception, for I would not see her make a fool of an honest man."

"Your conscience may rest easy," I replied coldly. "I am content with as much or as little as Mademoiselle Coralie desires to tell me."

She entered as I ceased speaking, and François slunk guiltily away. Her eye glanced from me to the portrait with keen intuition.

"François has told you," she said.

"He has told me," I replied, "but whatever may have been the fault of your parents, it is not yours. Be assured that it matters not to me that you are the half-sister of Mademoiselle de Folleville. Nay, it does make a difference; for any trouble you may suffer I ask the right to share. I love you the more because you bear this family no envy or malice, but hide your grief under a sweet gaiety which is nothing short of heroism, and I shall count it the highest honour of my life, Coralie, if you will be my wife." It must not be thought that it cost me nothing to make this speech, for though not of the *haute noblesse* I am a gentleman, and I had before my eyes the consternation of my mother when she should hear that I was to mate with a menial. Nevertheless, my mind was made up and I poured it forth. Coralie gave me no answer for a little space; wonder and blank dismay, and other emotions inexplicable to me, strove with her happiness, and so wrought upon her that at last she broke into hysterical laughter, clinging to me the while and hiding her face upon my shoulder.

"So you love me in spite of everything," she said. "Oh! you are good, good, Raoul,

though a Huguenot. Religion shall not part us. Nothing shall part us after this, if what you protest is true."

"True, as I know that you are Coralie. Henceforth, let us have no secrets from each other. Why did you not tell me all before? You might have trusted me."

"I could not tell you, Raoul, that I was the illegitimate daughter of the Baron de Folleville, for I do not believe it. It is not true. My mother is a saint."

"I will love you and believe in you whatever else I may be forced to believe," I asserted, "for I am sure that you would never intentionally deceive me." I could say no more, for I was convinced from the marvellous resemblance to the portrait that François had spoken the truth, as indeed he had.

So we were betrothed, to wait on fortune for our spousals until the wars should be ended. And now suddenly there was sprung upon me other work than the wooing of maids whether of high or low degree. For the business on which I was ostensibly sent proved to be other than the sinecure Montgomery had thought. The Armada was even then sailing up the Channel in all its pride and vainglory; but Hawkins had word

of its approach, and he and Howard of Effingham, with some of Drake's privateers, came out to meet it. The engagement took place nearly opposite Lion-sur-Mer,—as we were soon to have proof.

One of my men, Goupigny by name, whom I had posted as nearest coast-guard, brought me the first intimation of the arrival of the fleet, for he had noted extraordinary agitation among the fisher folk. The women kept a constant watch to seaward, while the men were continually flitting hither and thither in their small craft on the lookout for other hauls than fish. They were many of them wreckers, and were soon to have opportunity to pick casks of Spanish wine and other commodities from the flotsam and jetsam which the tides brought in; for two days later a fierce westerly gale drove the dismantled Spanish galleon, *San Salvador*, upon the reef before Lion-sur-Mer, and strewed all our coast with wreckage.

At the first news of what had occurred, I took horse and rode to the cliff where was the little lookout in which I had posted Goupigny. He was not there; nor did I marvel, for, as I looked seaward, I could see the tremendous surges pounding the stranded ship,

which was fast breaking up, and throwing upon the sands with every return some dark object, bales and splintered beams tangled with cordage, and here and there the bodies of sailors, the life beaten out of them by the sea.

As I looked I saw one flung upon the beach who was not quite dead. He stumbled to his feet, ran a few steps, then dropped exhausted, just out of reach of the ebbing wave, which reached out a treacherous fringed paw for its prey, and then fled backward to wrench more plunder from the ship. An instant later a man hurried along the base of the cliff to the shipwrecked Spaniard. I saw him rifle his pockets, take from his neck a gold chain, and he was hacking off his fingers with a knife in order to secure his rings when the pain brought the Spaniard to his senses, and he dealt the thief a blow in the face. The wrecker drew off, running back for his gun, which he had left at a distance, and as he raised it to take aim, I recognised my perfidious coast-guard Goupigny.

I shouted with all my might, but the roar of the winds and waves drowned my voice, and the Spaniard would certainly have been killed but for the sudden appearance of an

intrepid horsewoman, who galloped toward the miscreant, striking at him with her whip. Goupigny grasped at the reins, but the resolute woman dropped her whip and drew a cavalry pistol from its holster, whereupon the coward fell to his knees and whined for mercy, presently retreating under the edge of the cliff, and so out of my sight. Coralie (for it was none other) sprang from her horse, and binding the Spaniard's wounded hand with her kerchief, assisted him to mount, walking by his side and leading the horse.

I was eager to meet the actors in this little drama, but the face of the cliff was too precipitous for me to descend at this point, and when I reached the shore it was deserted by the three persons whom I have mentioned. But other bodies were being brought in by the tide, and presently the wreckers gathered like vultures, and I had business enough before me. Fortunately, my squad of soldiers arrived upon the scene in time to enforce my authority, and there was no more robbing of the dead. Of slaying there was no need, for the sea had had its will upon them all. Presently Goupigny himself joined us, and, not knowing that I had been a witness of the late occurrence, asserted that Mademoiselle de

Folleville had brought a band of armed retainers, and had rescued from his safeguard a formidable Spanish officer whom he had valiantly taken prisoner.

With that I ordered my men to seize him, and told him how I had witnessed his attempt to murder a helpless man, having first robbed him; and, the booty being found upon his person, I ordered him to be put in irons until the coming of Montgomery, who would certainly have him hanged.

The knave retorted right insolently that Montgomery's explicit orders were at all hazards to prevent the landing of Spaniards, and if, on searching the château of Lion-sur-Mer, this one were found concealed and nourished, I and not he would stand a good chance of hanging.

I winced at that, for he spoke not far from the truth, and I made speed to tell Coralie that I knew of her exploit, and to beg her to allow me to send the Spaniard under escort to Montgomery. But this she roundly refused to do, fearing for his safety.

"You should know me well enough," she said, "to be assured that I will always help the losing side. That will be your side soon. Your precious Montgomery will never attain

his pet ambition of becoming master of Mont Saint Michel. The Spaniards, after they have conquered England, will cross the Channel and sweep the Huguenots out of France. The tables will be turned then, for, instead of your protecting us, we shall have to protect you."

"Would you help me, Coralie," I asked, "if my life were in your hands?"

"Surely," she answered.

"Then help me now that my honour is at stake," I pleaded. "I have sent an express for Montgomery, and when he comes, even if I hold my tongue in regard to this man, Goupigny will not. The château will be searched, and the Spaniard will gain nothing by my disgrace."

She thought for a moment. "I do not desire your dishonour," she mused. "Ah! I have it. Mademoiselle shall deal with your master. She has as much wit as I, and is more personable and winsome."

"That were impossible," I vowed.

"Nay," she persisted, "were we equal in other respects, there is an attractiveness in rank and fine clothes, my dear Raoul, which will lend to any woman an added charm. If I have won your heart, Mademoiselle, with

her greater advantages, can surely win him to mercy. Only let your prisoner bide here until Montgomery comes, for indeed he is not able to march as far as Caen."

"The Comte de Montgomery is a stronger man than I, Coralie. Your mistress could not swerve him from his duty. I will keep the Spaniard here if you insist, but when the Comte comes, I shall deliver him up."

Her eyes danced with triumph. "'T is all I ask," she cried. "Search the château. Nay, I will not put you to that trouble. He is in the room above your own, and here is the key. Arrest him, make your report to Montgomery. You will surely not be to blame if, in spite of all your precautions, the bird will have flown."

"Coralie," I answered, seriously, "I will not be your accomplice. I warn you that I shall do all I can to keep my prisoner."

"Do your best, do your worst," she challenged me, "and I will outwit you."

I had a premonition that she spoke truly, but when I had seen the Spaniard I did not greatly care, for I found him slight of figure, of gentle manners, and suffering, moreover, from the nervous shock occasioned by his late experiences.

What Montgomery would do with him I knew not. The best that could be hoped for was rigorous imprisonment until his status could be determined, and in his condition this might mean death. I therefore locked him into the room and posted an incorruptible guard before the door, as in duty bound, hoping all the while that Coralie might find some way to keep her word.

My quarters at the château were on the third floor above the main entrance, the windows giving view in two directions. From one I could look down upon a rich dormer in the Renaissance style which lighted Mademoiselle de Folleville's apartment and sometimes afforded me a glimpse of Coralie. In the angle of the walls between there was a slender tourelle, holding (as I judged from studying it from without) a spiral staircase. I could see that it might very easily be a means of communication between Mademoiselle's room and the Spaniard's, and one would naturally expect to find a door leading from this staircase to my room as well.

It was therefore a little odd that the only apparent entrance to my chamber and to the one above it was upon the other side, from a large hall running through the centre of the

CHÂTEAU OF LION-SUR-MER.

château. I examined the wall carefully upon the inside. It was panelled in oak, and feeling along the moulding I presently lighted upon a spring which would have released a sliding door had it not been firmly nailed up from the staircase side. The points of the nails driven through the panel and moulding protruded slightly into my chamber. They were untarnished by rust, and shining. I concluded, therefore, that they had been recently driven, to keep me from using the staircase. I doubted whether the same precautions had been taken in the case of the Spaniard, and, if not, saw that he could very easily elude my guard and leave the château in this way. I had a guess, too, of where he would go, and by what means; for a mysterious, swift-sailing pinnace had been sighted that evening by one of my coast-guards, who knew it for one of the Saint Malo fleet, manned by the half-pirate Malouins whom Montgomery was striving to keep in their inner harbour, but who were always eluding his vigilance and stealing forth to smuggle supplies to Mont Saint Michel, or otherwise aid the Catholic cause. My man recognised this particular pinnace from its sails, patched with bars of red cloth, making the double cross of

the house of Lorraine; while the bouquets of blessed box on the mastheads further announced the faith of her captain, who had probably witnessed the sea-fight, and had followed the *San Salvador*, hoping to be of some assistance when it was driven upon our coast. I doubted not but some Catholic fisherman would inform Mademoiselle of the presence of the pinnace, and that the Spaniard would be taken on board that very night.

I had strained a point in winking at this evasion for Coralie's sake. What was my vexation, therefore, as I lay awake, to hear light footsteps tripping up and down the spiral staircase, and in the morning the restless tread of my prisoner pacing the floor at intervals.

To add to my embarrassment, the Comte de Montgomery arrived sooner than I had expected, and though for two days there was business enough demanding his attention relative to the wreckage of the *San Salvador*, which included guns and other munitions of war, at last all was done, and I could not longer delay reporting the presence of the Spaniard. Meantime the Count was better entertained than I had been, for the *appartement de parade* with the oriel windows was

assigned to him, and the ladies dined with him daily, a privilege which had never been granted me. Nevertheless, when I finally opened to him he was in bad humour.

"Why have you not told me this before?" he asked; and then, regarding me keenly, added:

"You need not reply, Raoul. I can see the hand of Mademoiselle de Folleville here, and, were it not that I know you to be an honourable man, I might also reproach you that, with all your opportunities, you have not advanced my interests with her one whit."

I swore that it irked me to confess it, but I had had no opportunity, having never been allowed speech with Mademoiselle.

"That is a little remarkable," he replied, drily, "for she has had much to tell me of her conversations with you. How else, indeed, could she have learned of my ambition to be Military Commander of Mont Saint Michel?"

I saw that Coralie must have betrayed my confidences to her lady, who had told him.

"Mistress or maid, what does it matter?" he asked. "It remains that we have been juggled with, and that this Spaniard has doubtless escaped."

"Pardon me," I contradicted. "I believe he is still in the château," and I led Montgomery to the room in which I had locked my prisoner; but, though the sentry still stood before the door, it was empty. The door communicating with the spiral staircase in the tower was, like that in my own chamber, a secret one, and though I could see the crack where the sliding panel had not been completely closed, I did not even then point it out to my friend. Nor did I object when he bade me go with him to Mademoiselle to sift the truth. Coralie had kept her word and tricked me, but I bore her no malice, for I still believed that she loved me.

Mademoiselle de Folleville was standing at the window of her boudoir, watching, as I believe, for our departure, for Montgomery had bidden her farewell, and the groom held our horses below. She turned with a quick movement as though she would have fled, but she was fairly trapped, and faced us bravely, though there were tears in her eyes. This tendered me not, no, nor her regal beauty, as she stood gowned like an empress in pearl-broidered satin, with pearls braided in her hair.

Neither her beauty nor her emotion moved

me one whit, naught save my astonishment that this queenly woman who answered to Montgomery's greeting as Mademoiselle de Folleville—who was indeed Mademoiselle—was also my Coralie, whom I had believed so childlike and innocent in all her sweet blithesomeness.

What my friend said to her I did not hear. I only looked, and looked again, bereft of my right senses. She dared not meet my eyes though she faced Montgomery resolutely, and his reproaches, angry at first, quieted under her calm gaze.

"All this is true, Monsieur," I heard her admit at last; "but even so, in what have I wronged you? If I believed that my guest's life was not safe in your hands, and strove to save him in other ways than through wheedling you with a pretence of affection, am I so much to blame?"

"And what of me? Have you been as open and true with me?" I cried.

"I will answer you another time, Monsieur de Rablotière," she replied, still avoiding my eyes.

"Nay, you will answer me now, or never," I insisted. "It suited not with your ideas of honour to purchase favours of my friend for

love, you boast. Then, what was the meaning of this game you played with me?"

"The game I played with you"—she echoed my words without a tremor—"was sprung upon me by the accident of our meeting. It had no other motive at first than a lonely girl's whim, her enjoyment in the acting of a little comedy. Afterwards—the game had other stakes than the moment's pleasure, or than this man's life—" But here her voice broke, and she turned her back upon me. God forgive me, I thought her feigning, to dupe me again, and I broke out hotly:

"So it was all a farce! The curtain is down at last, and I congratulate you on your skill as an actress, Mademoiselle."

"I do not know of what you are talking," bawled Montgomery, "unless you have made a fool of Rablotière as well as of me, and are striving to make us forget the question in hand. I believe that you are still secreting this Spaniard, and I demand that you surrender him to me, if he is not your lover. In which case, Mademoiselle, I would respect your right to retain him."

Montgomery spoke with a bitterness only pardonable in a rejected suitor. Mademoiselle flushed to the roots of her hair, which

seemed also to burn with an intenser flame. She turned with folded arms, and for the first time in this conversation met my gaze, though she still spoke to Montgomery.

"You are right thus far, Monsieur," she said. "The man whom I love is underneath this roof."

Then to my wonder—for she had seemed so strong—she dropped in a swoon.

I sprang forward, but Montgomery's iron grasp was on my arm. "She is acting still," he said; "ring for her servants, and let them call the jade's lover. This is no place for us, Raoul; we are both well rid of her, and of all women, say I, for the rest of our lives."

II

How the Armada was broken by that encounter with the English sea-dogs, and fled up the North Sea before them, not daring to return as it had come, but striving to round the British Isles and thus make its way back to Spain; how the winds and the waves fought for England and sunk the ill-fated ships, or drove them upon the Irish coast, where the barbarians brained the shipwrecked mariners with clubs and stones; and how only a pitiful

remnant of those who had sailed away so arrogantly ever reached Spain, where the Admiral of the flotilla was spat upon by mothers whose sons had perished through his cowardice,—all this is an old and a well-known story, and needs not that I recite it here. But what is not so well understood in France is that this beating which the Romanists received at the hands of Protestant England also put an end for ever to Catholic despotism in France. Only a show of power the party maintained, and such horrors as the Inquisition or the Saint Bartholomew could never come again by royal consent or with that of the people of France. Though of what savagery still remained in out-of-the-way corners to be subdued I was yet to be a witness.

Scarce a year from this time the day came for which Montgomery had so ardently longed, and the assault of Mont Saint Michel was offered him with every likelihood of success, for treachery within co-operated with valour without the walls.

That double-traitor Goupigny, false to every cause as well as to every master, had escaped from prison and been granted asylum at the Mount. In recompense for this kind-

ness he had immediately entered into negotiation with the Comte de Montgomery, promising for two hundred crowns, whose receipt I witnessed, to introduce our troops into the fortress, where we could fall upon the little garrison unawares, and then easily subdue the defenceless friars.

I had no stomach for this adventure, and this not alone because I would liefer win in a fair fight, but also that I had too much faith in Goupigny's unfaith, believing him capable of betraying whatever side suited his own advantage. His greeting was somewhat too oily when I remembered how I had handled him at Lion-sur-Mer. There was a shadow of that treatment in the ugly look he gave me when he said: "It will be the happiest moment of my life when I have the honour of welcoming you to Mont Saint Michel, Monsieur de Rablotière."

The night was moonless and but fitfully starlit between scudding clouds when our band, two hundred strong, marched out from Pont Orson across the sands, between the ebb and flow of the tide. The Mount loomed before us uncommonly grim and sinister, as it seemed to me. I am no coward, but the consciousness that I was on no honourable

errand oppressed me horribly. At that moment what the Abbey had stood for in the past (that Christianity which is the common heritage of Romanist and Huguenot) appealed to me. I thought of the order of knighthood instituted here, and seemed to see the chevaliers kneeling in their pillared hall. I saw, too, the building monks making their beloved Abbey strong, and carrying such a passion into their incredible labour that the intractable granite flowered into beauty, and even the drudgery of quarrying and hauling the heavy masses of stone became pure joy.

And with these pictures in my mind I almost forgot that the old days of sanctity and devotion were past, that the commendatory Abbot of Mont Saint Michel was a child of the house of Lorraine, but five years of age, and that the Sieur de Boissuzé, who was deputed military governor of the Abbey, was a cut-throat scoundrel.

Led by a sure guide we threaded the quicksands, and presented ourselves silently beneath the wall at the spot appointed, at the foot of the cliff beneath the *merveille*. Silent and ominous that wall of masonry lifted itself above our heads, with but one light twink-

ENTRANCE TO THE ABBEY OF MONT SAINT MICHEL.

ling from a window in the *salle du cellier*, in the lowest of the three stories, but still high in air.

It was Goupigny's signal that all was well, and that he was in waiting.

There was a little platform jutting from this window, with a windlass, by which the monks were in the habit of hoisting their provisions. Goupigny and a confederate were at the windlass, and would pull us up silently until enough had gathered in the *cellier* to assault the *corps de guard*.

Montgomery liked the trick by which we were to enter as little as I, but he had given his consent, and was there to stand by the event. Other faces showed blanched in the moonlight beside our own. I remember that as the rope swung down by which Goupigny was to hoist us, a great fellow marching next to me, whose bravery had never been impeached, was trembling like a leaf. He strove to wrench a ring from his little finger, asking me the while to give it to his wife if he never came down; but his finger had thickened about it since his wife gave it to him, and he needs must let it be.

One by one our men swung upward, dangling like gallows' prey between sky and land.

Not a sound came back to us after they stepped within the window, and in this fearsome stillness ninety of our two hundred mounted. At last Montgomery grew uneasy, for he saw lights springing forth here and there in other parts of the building, and they were streaming from the Almonry, a great hall communicating with the *cellier;* but we were too far beneath to see figures flitting about or to hear the clash of arms, and could not surmise what devil's work was going on.

So when Goupigny shouted, "Holloa! there, Montgomery. Come up, the fight is on!" he sprang to the rope; but I held him back; and the Sieur de Sourdeval, sharing my suspicions that treachery might be afoot, cried, "Throw us down a dead monk, Goupigny, to prove what you say."

There was no answer for what seemed to us a long space, and then with arms outstretched like the wings of a great bird of prey, there fell at my feet the corpse of a monk. Sourdeval, a little farther away than I, cried, "It is all right, Montgomery. See, the monks fly!"

But I knelt at the dead man's side; his face, even if I had known him, was unrecognisable, for it had been mangled not alone by the fall, but by many slashes before the unfortunate

had been cast from the window. "This is no work of my honest fellow-soldiers," I thought as I marked the brutal gashes, and I disposed his arm so that the sleeve of the frock covered the mutilated face. As I did so, my eye caught an object which startled me so that the blood rushed back upon my heart,—a ring upon the little finger, sunk deep into the flesh.

I could not be certain that this was my comrade at arms whom they had dressed as a monk to deceive us; for all I knew to the contrary, the monks might also wear their sweethearts' rings. But I snatched the rope from Montgomery's hand, saying, "Let me go up first. I will find out what they are doing up there. Follow not unless I call you."

As I reached the platform Goupigny clutched my arm with a grip which I knew betokened no friendship; but his look of exultation as I faced the flaring cresset changed to one of disappointment. "It is not Montgomery," he cried, "but only his truckling minion, Raoul de Rablotière."

Then a dozen men threw me to the earth, overpowered and disarmed me, and dragged me into the next hall, and I knew that I was in the jaws of death.

But what froze my blood at this supreme moment was not fear for my personal safety, but a great horror of what I saw, for I stood in a human slaughter-house. The pavement was slippery beneath my feet with the blood of my ninety murdered comrades, whose corpses were stacked like faggots on every side.

A brawny executioner, stripped to his waist, and red to his elbows, lifted a dripping sabre, and Goupigny pushed me toward a block hacked by many cuts. "On your knees," he sneered, "and I only wish Mademoiselle de Folleville could see us now."

At that word a dark-eyed, dark-faced man in the garb of a novice darted across the room, struck Goupigny in the face, and returning spoke passionately to the Governor of the garrison. It was the Spaniard, my escaped prisoner, and I could see that he was begging for my life.

I had scarcely time for recognition, none to wonder at his act, or at his monastic dress, for Boissuzé, the monster who had instituted all this villainy, roared to Goupigny to hold his tongue, and to the headsman to put by his sword.

"Young man," he said to me, "if you do

not care to join your comrades, listen to what I say. We are impatient to welcome Montgomery. He should not lag thus behind his men. Go to that window, and shout to him that all is well, and you have my pledge that you, and you alone of all his command, shall leave Mont Saint Michel in safety." I made no reply, not that I had any intention of consenting to such infamy, but I am slow at speech, and the revolt in my soul was too great for words. He mistook my silence.

The Spaniard approached me. "I beseech you to save your life, Signor, for *her* sake," he said in a low voice. A great astonishment filled me. "I will explain afterward," he said, "only go, go at once, and do as the commander bids you. Your refusal will avail your friends nothing."

They pushed me to the window, and the cool night air revived me somewhat (for what I had seen had sickened me). A great longing for life surged up within me. Somehow the words of the Spaniard had convinced me that I had misjudged Coralie, and that she was true to me in spite of all. Even so I would not win her by foul means, and putting that temptation behind me, I craned forth from the window like a gargoyle, my hands

clutching the sill, while some of those within held me by my heels. I could see my friends, and Montgomery saw me. "Is all well, Rablotière?" he cried. "Nay, nay!" I shouted. "Treason! A trap! A trap! Flee for your life!"

With that they pulled me in so violently that my head struck the floor, and I swooned with the pain, believing all at an end for me in this world.

But when I came to my senses I found myself alone, save for the Spaniard, who was bathing my face, and for Boissuzé, who towered over us.

"'T was the prettiest thing I have seen in all my life," said he. "Will you bide as my lieutenant, lad? No? I thought not. Well, go to your dear Montgomery. I would I had any one in my command who loved me so well."

With that he clanked off, and the Spaniard led me, by many staircases and winding passages, to the shore, whence we were guided by a monk who knew the way between the dangerous quicksands to the mainland, which Montgomery, believing me past mortal aid, had already regained with the remnant of his command.

I have remarked on the ominous silence of the Abbey as it lay in wait for us. Now, on the contrary, as we retreated, its great bells boomed out its triumph and defiance. I have heard nothing in all my life more awful than the clangour of those bells, tolling with such fiendish glee the death of so many brave men.

There came to me, however, a light even in that gloom, for on the way I besought the Spaniard to tell me what he meant when he urged me to save my life for Mademoiselle's sake.

"Because she loves you," he replied, "and methinks you should know it already."

"But I heard her admit to Montgomery that she loved you," I answered.

"Think over what she said," the Spaniard returned. "I was standing on the spiral staircase with the door ajar, and I, too, heard her, but I attached no such meaning to her words."

"They were plain enough," I replied, "and they are graven indelibly upon my memory: 'You have spoken truly,' she said to Montgomery, 'the man whom I love is beneath this roof'; and you have just admitted that you were there."

"But was I then her only guest?" the

Spaniard asked with a smile. "*You* were beneath her roof at the same time. Had she given you no reason to believe that she loved you? Ought you not to have understood her? After you went away it was long before we could bring her from that swoon, and her first words to me on awaking were to bid me leave her château, for she had saved my life at the expense of her own happiness.

"Fortunately, one of the Malouin fishing boats touched at Lion-sur-Mer that night and brought me to this Abbey. When I learned of the fate of the Armada, I gladly took upon myself the vows of a monk. I am horrified by what has been done here. It is that ruffian Boissuzé who is responsible, and not the main body of the monks, who knew nothing of what was passing. Lay not that crime to the brotherhood.

"Tell Mademoiselle that I congratulate her, as I could not have done had you taken my advice and saved your life at the expense of your honour,—and so farewell."

It was years before I could blot the memory of what I had seen at Mont Saint Michel from my mental vision. Waking or dreaming, that ghastly human shambles was before my eyes, insomuch that when the wars were over and

the Comte de Montgomery being offered the command of the garrison, and in spite of his former ambition desiring to depute this post to me, I, still less than he, could endure to abide there, or even to hear the tolling of its bells across the sands, but gave the Mount a wide berth in all my journeys.

It was a misfortunate asylum for Goupigny, for I heard that a dismantled hulk (conceived to be that of one of the Spanish galleons) drifting into the bay shortly after our visit, he went out to it secretly at low tide, seeking treasure, and was sucked under by the quicksands.

And what more is there to say?

Surely, unless my reader is as dull of wit as he who writes these memoirs, needs not that I make more plain what even I understood at last, that my dear lady, knowing well my loyalty to my friend, and that for his sake I would never have wooed her in her proper person, had deceived me for my own unutterable gain. My eyes being now opened, I made immediate opportunity to betake myself to Lion-sur-Mer, and there was I received as one from the dead, for rumour had it that I had perished in that horrible massacre.

And now that Henri of Navarre is crowned,

and toleration the fashion, there is respect on both sides for the other's religion, which in all true men and women I have found differs but in the outward expression, and is the same at heart.

So, though the Lady of Lion-sur-Mer still goes to the Mass and I to the preaching, there is no happier husband in all France than I, nor more contented wife, as I oft hear Madame de Rablotière declare, than she who was once Mademoiselle de Folleville.

THE SANDS FROM THE ROOF OF THE ABBEY OF MONT SAINT MICHEL.

CHAPTER XIII

A FUGITIVE ABBOT

IN all Normandy there is no Abbey so enchanting in its ruin as Saint Wandrille. Nature has dealt tenderly with it: where an arch has been broken, the ivy flings its festoons; where a stone is missing, a wild flower stops the chink. It hides itself coquettishly a little apart from the ordinary track of tourists, but is a favourite haunt of artists, and easy of access from Caudebec or Yvetot.

Though a small Abbey, it is one which has grown in beauty through the centuries. Exquisite bits of early Gothic and sturdy earlier Norman are to be found here side by side; but most conspicuous of all is the style which the Pompadour made the vogue in the eighteenth century.

Graceful but ostentatious, it tells us that

men of noble family who spent the major part of their lives at Court loved to make the Abbey a luxurious retreat for lazy day-dreams in the intervals of a too fatiguing social life. And such were its Commendatory Abbots, voluptuaries whose dilletante taste might well have planned this little palace, but who would hardly have lavished their wealth upon so hidden a paradise. Who, then, was the man whose munificent generosity executed these later buildings?

The guardian who showed them had her tradition of a nameless benefactor, who, for the sake of the woman he loved, gave up all this *otium cum dignitate* on the very day upon which he was appointed Abbot.

The proof that the legend was true lay to her simple mind in the fact that it was all written out in a time-yellowed manuscript, said to have been discovered in Canada, which some visitor had left at Saint Wandrille.

It was a strange story that we read under the broken arches, but its strangest part is confirmed and vouched for in the *Relations of the Jesuits*, and some warfare like this must have been fought out in those tortured hearts ere they found their way to peace.

MONUMENTAL GATEWAY IN THE STYLE OF THE 18TH CENTURY, LOUIS XV.

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GATEWAY, 15TH CENTURY, ABBEY OF SAINT WANDRILLE.

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THE MANUSCRIPT

I cannot remember the time when I did not love Madeleine de Chauvigny.

Our fathers' estates joined, and were separated only by a brawling stream, which was our favourite resort. I know now that we saw so much of one another because the *garde-chasse* to whom I was entrusted was in love with the little girl's nurse, and the brook was their trysting-place. It was for this reason that my Isidore showed me how to set otter-traps on its banks, and built the rustic bridge which was crossed so often by our childish feet, and that Madeleine's Opportune was always seeking for berries or herbs on our side of the stream, while their charges speared frogs and built dams or climbed the trees for birds' nests.

Later we rode to hounds in company, for Madeleine was something of a tomboy and a good comrade. We quarrelled at times, as over the question as to which of us it was who killed the boar. And this incident I may as well relate, as it is a typical one. I was fourteen then, she twelve. It was the summer before we were both sent away to school —and the beginning of our troubles.

We were hunting with Isidore, the hounds

in full cry, following, as we supposed, a deer; but the ground was hard, the track faint, and when we came up with the dogs we found a boar at bay.

I flung my reins to Madeleine, sprang to my feet, and took aim at short range; but she, carried away by the excitement of the moment, lifted her gun to shoulder and fired without dismounting. It was a reckless thing to do, for I might have been killed. I heard her bullet sing past my ear and bury itself in the trunk of a tree at the very instant that my own pierced the brain of the boar.

Isidore arrived a moment later and gave the creature its *coup de grace* with his hunting-knife, but it had already received a death-wound.

"I killed it," Madeleine boasted. "I saved René's life."

"Indeed, you very nearly took my life," I retorted angrily; "and I will thank you not to do so again."

We wrangled all the way home, Madeleine insisting that it was my shot which had gone wild, and finally bursting into tears, and declaring that even if it were not so, if I cared for her at all I would have given her the credit of the exploit.

That put a new face upon the matter, and I yielded at once, letting her tell the story in her own way, and allowing myself to be ridiculed for my poor marksmanship; the exasperating effect of this magnanimity being that she grew to believe her own version, and I got no credit, even in her own eyes, for my generosity.

It was our last quarrel for many a long day, for that summer my mother died, and my home-life ended. The monks of Saint Wandrille at this time conducted a *pensionnat* for ten boys destined to be choristers, and my father taking counsel of his friend, François de Harlay, Archbishop of Rouen, I was sent to their school.

Music was my passion. There was a good organ in the chapel, and the choirmasters of the Abbey had been musicians from the time of Gervold. I spent three years at Saint Wandrille in uneventful but congenial study, when I was summoned to the château by the death of my father. My future was now to be decided upon with my guardian, but before it came to that I felt that I must see Madeleine de Chauvigny; and she was at home now, having returned from the Ursuline convent where she had received her education.

I met her leaning on the rail of the rustic bridge as I took the path through the park to her father's château, and I was at her side at once, striving to pour forth my declaration.

Striving, I say, for I had but blundered into it when she stopped me. "I never was like other girls, René," she said kindly; "I am less so now. I would not make a good wife."

"No matter," I cried, "but you are a capital good fellow, Madeleine. Only say you do not detest me, and we will be two boon companions, as in the old days."

"Nay, but listen, René. The reason lies deeper than you think. It is not you but marriage itself that I detest; and if you care for me as much as you say, you can help me now. You asked me a moment ago to intercede with my father for you. You need no intercession. He told me this morning that he would offer my hand to you through your guardian before you leave the château. Only tell him that you refuse the honour, and I shall believe that there is such a thing as disinterested friendship."

"Refuse you, Madeleine!" I cried; "never!"

"Very well, then, I shall have to defy you both, and if you knew how difficult my father

is, René, I think you would be willing to make things easier for me."

"But what will you do with your life?" I asked.

"When I can bend circumstances to my will, I shall go back to the Ursulines, and become a nun."

"You a nun, Madeleine! You could not endure that slavery."

"I have lived with them three years. I should know by this time what it is. Be assured that I would not take this step unless I saw in it the way to a *career*. I cannot tell you all, René, but I have not surrendered my ambition. I have my idea!"

I did not wholly understand her schemes. I thought she was dreaming of becoming Abbess of the convent. What I did understand was that I was as nothing in her plans. Nothing, unless I could help to their realisation, and for that she would walk unscrupulously on my heart.

"Have your own way," I replied bitterly, when this had dawned upon me, "for if these are your true feelings, nothing would induce me to marry you."

It was in this surly mood that I debated my vocation with my guardian.

"Had your father been spared," he said, "he would have secured for you an appointment in the army. Alas! I have no influence in that direction; but Monsieur de Chauvigny offers with his daughter wealth which will unlock any career. Your refusal of his proposition is unalterable?"

"Absolutely so."

"Then I must say, my dear René, that I do not see what you propose to do."

"I have some means, I suppose?"

"Ample, ample, for the aimless life of a country gentleman; but is that your choice?"

"Not at all. I shall go back to Saint Wandrille. Thank heaven, I have learned to love it. I will become a monk."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the Archbishop; and this ejaculation coming from such a source greatly surprised me.

"My dear boy," he explained, "you shall not with my consent take upon yourself sacred vows from mere pique. Go back to Saint Wandrille, if you choose; interest yourself in its restoration, as its patron, if it pleases you so to do, but remain free until your majority, that you may not in after years reproach yourself and me for the decision of this hour."

So I returned to my dear Abbey at a most interesting period in its history. Beautiful it had always been from the time that Wandrille, friend and courtier of Dagobert, first founded it. But it had suffered cruelly in the Huguenot wars, when Gabriel de Montgomery mutilated its noble buildings. The pathos of its broken arches was most appealing. The monks laboured with trowel and chisel, hod and barrow to repair the ravages. I thought of my old love no longer with rancour, but with gentle melancholy, and in my twenty-first year I assured the good Archbishop that I had definitely made up my mind to devote myself to the religious life and my fortune to the Abbey.

He consented on condition that I would go with him to Versailles and lead for a season the life of a man of the world, that I might know what I was relinquishing. François de Harlay has been called a worldly prelate, but he used the world as an instrument for the Church. He knew that preferment came through the influence of women, and he had even then the design of asking for me from the King the promise of appointment as Abbé Commendataire of Saint Wandrille, when the then aged incumbent should be gathered to his fathers.

I was accordingly introduced to the most prominent Court Ladies, my talent for music being the opening wedge. I led the choristers at the royal chapel, played in several of the great churches of Paris, and, finally, highest honour and privilege! was invited by a reigning beauty to accompany at her *salon* an opera singer then the rage. The lady's name was Madame de la Peltrie. I had heard her spoken of as one of the most popular of the women of the Court, but I knew not to what I owed my invitation until I recognised in my hostess none other than Madeleine de Chauvigny.

To find her leading a mundane, frivolous life, and married to a man in every way my inferior, when I had fancied her a professed nun, and was about myself to take vows because of her influence and example,was indeed a violent shock. I was rude to her, I know, disregarding her extended hand, and passing at once to the harpsichord, where I punished the unoffending instrument for my displeasure. I played vilely and offended the vocalist by my inattention and discourtesy, and I could think of no taunt cruel enough to launch against the woman I had loved.

"So this is the way in which you forsake the world and mortify the flesh," I said to her

GATE OF THE VIRGIN SAINT WANDRILLE.
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RUINS OF CHURCH OF THE ABBEY OF SAINT WANDRILLE.
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in a low voice when she approached me with eager appeal crying to me from every feature of her expressive face.

She winced, for the blow had struck home, but there were wondering eyes fixed upon us, and she replied, quite as though I had asked a question in regard to the songs which I was turning over:

"Yes, it is exceptional, this old *chanson* which I have chosen as my part in our little performance; but it should present no difficulties for you, Monsieur. I was sure you would understand it."

And then she sang, in a thin voice, with no power or range, but with infinite pathos, "*L'habit le moine ne fait pas.*"

To my ear it was a confession that her life was one long penance. If she suffered, I told myself, she deserved to do so; but I thought it mere pose and dissembling like the affectation of enthusiasm of the other ladies for the Canadian missions. Their patroness, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, was present, and all the talk was of the Society of Jesus, then so much the vogue.

"Zeal for martyrdom, indeed!" I said to my guardian afterward; "they are a set of hypocrites, who make fanatics of silly women.

How many of them would endure the least pain for the sake of the souls of the Indians for which they pretend such concern?"

"Softly, softly!" said the Archbishop; "the Jesuits practise what they preach, and are many of them heroes."

"The more fools they," I insisted. "Does God call us to martyrdom now? Can we not serve Him while enjoying with thankfulness the comforts which He gives us?"

"As, for instance, the Abbacy of Saint Wandrille?" the Archbishop asked quizzically. "I had hoped so, my dear René; but I am sorry to tell you that I have not succeeded in gaining an audience with the King on that head. I fear that there is another candidate with more powerful influence in the field."

Not long after this experience we bade adieu to Versailles, my guardian returning to Rouen, and I to my château, as my estate demanded my attention. I was reminded here at every turn of Madeleine. Now it was Isidore, the *garde-chasse*, who referred to the time when she saved my life by shooting the boar.

Her point of view had become the accepted tradition, though at the time Isidore had had his doubts. He had married Opportune,

Madeleine's nurse, who annoyed me still more by her reminiscences.

I had been at the château but a few months when a most unexpected crisis occurred, and Opportune rushed into the library, where I was trying to read, exclaiming: "My poor lamb! My poor lamb! He is dead! he is dead!"

"Monsieur de Chauvigny?" I cried, feeling instinctively that this touched Madeleine.

"No, would to heaven that it were her father. It is Monsieur de la Peltrie who has just died. My poor lamb! I must go to her, Monsieur."

"Stop!" I commanded. "Tell me the truth, Opportune. Is not this event a release for Madame? I have heard that there was no love between them."

"A release to the cloister, Monsieur. She was crazy to be a nun, but her father would not permit it. Now she will be still more possessed to leave the world, and he will not be able to prevent her. Ah! what a loss! What a shame! And she so young, so beautiful! Oh! Monsieur, you loved her once. Save her now."

"Woman," I cried, "is this the time to think of such things? Go to her, and hold your tongue."

She kissed my hand. "Bless you, Monsieur, for that word. It is not the time *now*. And I will hold my tongue, for you will save her."

All that night I paced my room in a delirium of hope; for my love for Madeleine, which had never died, flamed up in my heart with new intensity. "Surely," I told myself, "the hand of Providence is here. It must be for this that I am not yet a monk, that my guardian failed in securing the benefice which he desired for me, that I saw Madeleine at Versailles, and that she let me see her regret. But does she regret?" I asked. "Is it possible that she loves me? If so, surely she will make some sign."

Scarcely had I reached this conclusion after some weeks of alternate hope and despair, when she sent to me bidding me ask her of her father as my wife. Wonderful as this statement must seem, it is not so strange, so impossible, as the truth which lay behind it, for it was no ordinary marriage to which I was bidden.

The messenger was a Jesuit, called Père Ignace, whom I liked not at first sight, and whom later I was bitterly to hate. First pledging me to secrecy, he told me that

Madeleine appealed to me as the only friend whom she could rely upon in a supreme moment. She had decided to go to Canada as missionary to the little Indian girls; but her father, who had previously thwarted her vocation, was so unalterably opposed to this desire, that he had threatened to disinherit her, insisting that she should immediately remarry as guarantee that she would not adopt a religious life after his death.

Madame de la Peltrie desired to secure his fortune for her enterprise, and begged to be allowed time; but Monsieur de Chauvigny, knowing himself to be the victim of an incurable disease, demanded an instant carrying out of his commands.

In this emergency the Jesuit felt that a pious subterfuge was allowable, and suggested a sham marriage to quiet the father's fears. The only embarrassment so far was to find a disinterested gentleman who would oblige them by going through with a mock ceremony, and so conduct himself afterward that Monsieur de Chauvigny would have no suspicions.

It was Madeleine's father who had unwittingly suggested me. He had marked my continued presence in the neighbourhood, and had recalled my former refusal of his

daughter's hand. "I believe on my soul that you were at the bottom of that," he had said to Madeleine, "and that the lad loves you still. I would die content if I could see you his wife."

"Madame de la Peltrie has confided to me," the Jesuit added, "how entirely Monsieur de Chauvigny is mistaken in the nature of your regard for her; and this, with information which I have obtained from the Prior of Saint Wandrille that it is your intention to enter the cloister convinces me that you are the man destined for this peculiar service."

I broke out here with an indignant refusal to have anything to do with such crooked proceedings. The wily Jesuit allowed me to exhaust myself, and then returned to the charge with smiling persistence.

"If I understand the drift of Monsieur's objections to the course of conduct which I suggest," he replied suavely, "they are entirely based on a misconception which does honour to the sensitiveness of his conscience. When unusual situations face us, is it not our duty to refer the decision to our spiritual guides?"

I calmed at that, and replied that I was willing to submit the question to his Grace

François de Harlay, Archbishop of Rouen, and the Jesuit accepted him as arbiter.

What was my surprise a fortnight later when my guardian, instead of writing me that he had given the Jesuit his quietus, himself knocked at my door, having come for the especial purpose of forwarding the scheme. I did not know until afterward that the argument which had convinced my kind friend was the promise that if I served the Jesuits in this matter their influence would secure for me the Abbacy of Saint Wandrille.

I do not now remember the arguments with which the Archbishop convinced me, or whether I was convinced at all, that what I was to do was honourable. I only remember that he gave me a little book, *The Imitation of Christ*, with this passage marked to meditate upon:

"In commanding it is possible to err, in obeying never." And this dictum, though it seemed to me a paradox, I could not set myself up to gainsay, so obeyed it.

And here I must confess that I might not have been so yielding but for Madeleine herself. While I was still recalcitrant, she granted me an interview by appointment at our old playground. The rustic bridge had

fallen in ruin. "It is a bad omen," she said as we faced each other on opposite banks. "You cannot cross to me nor I to you."

"Nay," I replied, "there is no barrier which can keep me from you if you will that I cross it," and retiring a little and taking a running leap I fell at her feet, and clasping her about the knees covered her hands with kisses.

"Can you not see, do you not understand," I cried, "that the reason I cannot meet your wishes in this matter is that I love you too much to endure it. I could not bear to be near you, and to feign blessedness which I can never hope for."

She smiled mysteriously. "And who prevents your hoping?" she asked.

I caught her in my arms again. "Do you mean it? No; you are coquetting with me. It was the Jesuits' bidding, that all means are justifiable to gain your end."

"Listen, René, for I am telling you the truth. How can we know the result of any step? We can only do what our spiritual guides tell us is our duty. If the end is different from what they and we proposed, surely it is God who makes it so, and it must be right."

"Then if I *make* you love me, you will re-

pudiate this detestable subterfuge," I asked, "and be in very truth my wife?"

"Surely," she promised, "if I love you enough; for in that case I shall not be able —I shall not wish—to do otherwise."

That one blessed chance in ten thousand was enough, and after that I was as clay in their hands.

So the settlements were signed and the sham marriage took place, Monsieur de Chauvigny making a new will and leaving his daughter all his fortune. The registrar of the contract was himself deceived, for when we both as principals and our witnesses signed our names—apparently in the book of records,—it was upon a sheet of paper cleverly interleaved by Père Ignace, which being removed left no trace either of the transaction or of any mutilation of the pages. Also above our signatures he afterwards wrote out the vow of chastity, which, being repeated to us in Latin instead of the marriage office, we solemnly took upon ourselves, what time Monsieur de Chauvigny fondly imagined that we were being united in holy matrimony.

After the ceremony, which left us white as the dead, there was much embracing by my

deluded father-in-law, congratulations by the wedding guests, and a banquet which choked me, and, without a wedding journey, I took Madame to my château, which was henceforth to be her home.

The world knows by our depositions and those of our servants what manner of life we led.

Our apartments at the château were connected, or rather divided, by a small boudoir, which was converted into the sleeping-room of my serving-man. That he ever really slept at his post I do not believe. He was at that time a Jesuit in novitiate, and a faithful sentinel, and he well knows that my foot never passed the threshold of my lady's chamber.

Her maid kept constant guard also, and we were never alone together. Save for this, our life was like that of other husbands and wives of our rank. We went much into society and entertained much, and none of our guests suspected our double lives. I strove to reach her heart through music, but it never seemed to convey to her the message which I intended. I read to her from the poets while her hands were busy with some light fancy-work, but, though I watched her furtively, I caught no

personal application of the eloquent passages which I selected.

We talked often of the interests which we had in common and of those which divided us—the missions, which always angered me, and my plans for restoring the Abbey, which she treated with frank indifference. We never touched on either of these subjects without quarrelling, quite after the manner of married people as I have observed them.

Père Ignace smiled when he listened to our controversies; for, acute as he was in most things, he did not know that the more violently we disputed the more we regretted afterward our hasty words and extravagant expressions. If we could only have fallen out more seriously there might have been complete understanding long before it came, and we were very near it once.

I was reproaching her for her lack of appreciation of architecture. "If you had ever seen Saint Wandrille," I said, "you could not help loving the old Abbey as I do. Every stone of it is precious to me."

"I should never care for it," she replied; "and the reason is that we are essentially different. You are interested in *things*, I in *people*. You in art and its masterpieces, I in

history and the deeds that make history. You would be content to spend your life like so many other unknown Abbots and architects in making this Abbey a thing of beauty and then pass away, ignored and unremembered. Is it not so, René?"

"Gladly," I replied, "so the Abbey were admired and loved."

"Well, so would not I. I care not for love, but admiration I must and will have while I am living to enjoy it, and fame after I am gone. I want to *do* something splendid, something worth the living, and I am willing to dare and to suffer for it as Joan of Arc did if I can have her reward. I will *make* the world admire me some day. What is more, I will make *you* admire me, René. You smile and think me romantic, silly; but there will come a day when you will say without smiling: 'She was a heroine.'"

"I think," I replied, "that heroism is unconscious. I do not believe that Joan of Arc did what she did for the sake of being admired, but for the sake of France, simply because God called her and she could not do otherwise."

She flushed. "Is love of admiration, then, so despicable a motive, when it prompts to

noble deeds? What is your love for your Abbey but placing higher value on stocks and stones than on human lives and souls? You would have played the part of the Abbot of Jumièges, Nicolas le Roux. You know that to save his Abbey from destruction by the English, he became one of the judges who at Rouen sent Joan of Arc to the stake. It was a question whether his precious Abbey must burn or only a girl—only the Saviour of France. So, if the alternative arose, you would let me burn, instead of Saint Wandrille."

I remembered those passionate words afterward. I remember them now, and that is why I am where I am.

I was on the point of telling her how much more than the Abbey I loved her, how willingly I would see it fall into complete ruin if she would but abandon her wild dreams for my sake. The pendulum had swung far enough to the wrangling side for this reaction—indeed, her last words seemed to challenge it; when the Jesuit—who had been pacing in the shrubbery and had overheard all, presented himself blandly.

"What, quarrelling again?" he said, smoothly; "this will never do, and on such

entirely reconcilable lines. The aims to which you have individually so solemnly devoted yourselves are incontestably best for each. As Madame could only be happy in the career of heroic achievement which she has chosen, so Monsieur's temperament fits him for a life of solitude and study. Do not quarrel, my children, because your natures are incompatible. Be thankful that you are not fettered for life in a relation which would have meant not alone the relinquishment of your highest ambitions, but the intolerable friction of discordant tastes and unreconcilable opinions."

I was silent, devouring Madeleine's face for some sign of revolt from this dictum, but there was none visible. Except for that outburst of anger, she held herself in admirable self-control; but for me the situation became more and more impossible, and who with the spirit of a man could have borne such an ordeal?

The inevitable thunderbolt which was to clear the atmosphere came with the death of Monsieur de Chauvigny, a sudden death though possible at any time, as we had long known. It was after the interment that Père Ignace voiced the thought which was uppermost in my mind.

"And now that all need of concealment is removed, the truth as to your relations must be announced to the world."

"Yes," I replied, eagerly; "no more deceit, the truth, the real truth."

"Not yet," Madeleine pleaded. "Let the will be read first, and the property secured to me. It is my desire that the revelation shall be made at Tours, at the Ursuline convent where I was educated, in the presence of the dear Mother Superior and of all the nuns whom I loved. They shall elect from their number the Abbess of the convent which I will found in Canada. Invite the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, the Archbishop of Rouen, and whom you will to be present. Let it be a very formal as well as sacred ceremonial, but do not mar it by any premature announcement."

Madeleine's legal business was at last completed, and her property so arranged that a signature or two could turn it over to the purpose which she contemplated. There was no longer any excuse for delay, and we set out for Tours in a travelling carriage, accompanied by Père Ignace.

For four days we rode together, the longest and the shortest of my life. The shortest, for

creep as we might each evening brought us inexorably nearer the end. The longest, because I lived much in that time,—seeing all my past and all my future with the clearness which comes to men upon their deathbeds. I said nothing, for Père Ignace was always seated opposite, apparently absorbed in his breviary, though I know that he read my feelings in my tell-tale face, for more than once he laid his book open upon his knee, and we could see unfolded within its leaves a written paper bearing our signatures, the vow of chastity which we had signed in the Hotel de Ville, when the wedding guests imagined that we were recording our names in the register of marriages.

Madeleine did not recognise this paper until the last afternoon of our journey. We had reached Saint Symphorien, the northern faubourg of Tours, and the last stage of our journey. As we alighted at an inn for supper, Madeleine remarked on the beauty of the view, and proposed that we should walk a little way upon the stone bridge which spans the Loire, while Père Ignace ordered supper.

He could not refuse, but he opened his breviary and pointed to the pledge. She met his significant look with dignity. "I have

not forgotten, my Father, but as this is the last opportunity which I shall have for a farewell conversation with Monsieur de Bernières, I trust that you will permit it."

He looked at us suspiciously, and, only half satisfied, entered the inn, muttering that he would join us presently.

"Quick, quick, René!" she whispered, and we hurried out upon the bridge.

"That was the compact which binds us to our vows," she said to me in a choking voice.

"Is it possible that you regret it?" I exclaimed.

"Can you doubt it?" she replied faintly.

"Then it is not too late," I declared. "I can wrench it from his hands and we shall be free. You can endow the mission with your fortune. That will appear a sufficient reason for this journey and the invitations you have sent your friends to be present, but you need not go. I will give up Saint Wandrille, everything for you, my love, my love!"

She was faint with emotion, and leaned giddily on the parapet of the bridge. There was no one near, and my arms were about her. Passionately I begged her to reconsider her resolution.

"If the paper were destroyed, Père Ignace

would still witness against us," she answered.

"I can silence him," I replied. "It is only money which he wishes. He shall have all of yours and as much of mine as he demands."

"But the other witnesses? We cannot be free so long as they live."

"There were no other witnesses save the Archbishop," I protested, "and I can win him. The others who saw us write our names knew not what we signed. Père Ignace is the only other human being who knows of the existence of our vow."

"But *we* know, René, and God was witness. You cannot so sin against your conscience."

"Yes," I replied, "I can. I will give my salvation for your love."

"You cannot have it on those terms," Père Ignace sternly asserted. He had followed unperceived, and had heard my last excited utterances.

"You cannot bribe me, for I watch over her soul as one who must give an account."

"Then render that account now," I cried, and throwing myself upon him suddenly with all my force I hurled him over the parapet and into the river.

"Murderer!" cried Madeleine, and in that

word I heard the death sentence of all my hopes.

"I can swim," I panted. "Shall I save him? Think well what it means."

"Save him! Save him!" she entreated; and I leaped the parapet and was battling the river for dear life—nay, but for two hateful lives, that of my enemy and my own, which was no longer dear to me. It was a harder matter than I thought, for he mistook my kind intentions and struggled in my grasp; but at last I brought him unconscious to the shore. Madeleine's cries for help had brought a knot of bargemen who assisted us to the inn, where Père Ignace presently revived.

"And do you tell me that this man saved my life?" he asked of the witnesses.

"Most gallantly," they all assured him. "At the risk of his own," the innkeeper added, "for I was on the bridge, having come to call you to supper, and saw him leap after you into the water."

Père Ignace was silent for a space, but when we were alone together he said: "Even this bribe I will not accept, for I count my life as nothing as weighed against my duty."

"And my happiness is nothing," I replied, "in comparison with hers. I relinquish all."

"Then, my son, I absolve you," he said, kindly, "for you have expiated your fault. There are none who are not tempted. You have my respect and my silence."

I need not relate, for it is everywhere known, how the next day in the chapel of the Ursulines Madeleine and I publicly repudiated and relinquished each other, and how a few weeks later the little band of devoted women sailed from Brest, followed by the prayers and tears of a vast multitude.

Madeleine was heroic to the last; but my guardian led me away half demented from that embarkation, for my heart was broken.

I retired to Saint Wandrille, taking the vows of a simple monk, and devoted all that I possessed to its restoration. The dear Archbishop visited me frequently, for he loved to retreat to this exquisite spot from his many cares. He was aging sensibly, growing heavy in mind and body, but more benignant than ever. Our Abbé Commendataire never came near Saint Wandrille, but he filled it with costly objects of ecclesiastical art until it resembled a palace rather than a religious house.

So five years passed, and one memorable

CLOISTER OF SAINT WANDRILLE.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

CLOISTER, L'ABBAYE DE LA VIGNE.

day my guardian arrived with the news that our absentee Abbot was dead. He delivered the tidings with no note of regret, but with a sweeping gesture which took in the sumptuously appointed library added: "It is a well-lined nest which his successor will enjoy, is it not, my René?"

"And to think," I replied, "that our late Abbot never saw the luxuries which he has provided for a man in whom he had no interest."

"Eh! What? The late Abbot provided all this? You are greatly mistaken, René. It was I who donated these treasures of art to Saint Wandrille, and they are to be enjoyed by a man in whom I have a very great interest. None other than René de Bernières, the new Abbot of Saint Wandrille. Nay, do not look so incredulous. Here is Brother Xavier of the Society of Jesus, who comes directly from his Majesty with your appointment. Père Ignace has not been unmindful of what he and the Society at large owe you. The Jesuits have laboured diligently in anticipation of the long-expected death of the late Abbot. Indeed, your credentials were signed two years since, and it only remained to affix the date to-day."

I expressed my sense of obligation, but while I entertained my guests in the almost regal *palais abbatial*, I reflected bitterly that all this had come to me as the price for the part which I had played—the rescue of Pére Ignace and my supposed voluntary relinquishment of Madeleine.

As fate would have it, another guest knocked at the Abbey gate that night, Father Jogues, a Jesuit missionary returned from America, having escaped after incredible tortures from the hands of the Iroquois. Taken captive by the heathen, he had witnessed the martyrdom of his associate, and had administered the rites of religion to other captives as they were being burned to death. He had been starved, frozen, given over to the Indian children—true imps of Satan—to be tortured, and had retaliated by baptising them, thus snatching their souls from the clutches of the devil. One of his thumbs had been burned off in a red-hot calumet, and his hands bored with hot irons, until they seemed to bear the sacred stigmata. His savage masters had taken him to Albany on one of their trading expeditions, and the Dutch, taking pity upon him, had concealed and sent him to New York, whence he had been given passage

The Room of the Missionary

From the painting by Vibert

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The Return of the Missionary.
From the painting by Vibert.

to England, and had at last arrived in France.

As I contrasted the living martyrdom of this missionary with my own life of selfish ease, I could but admit that if I believed what I professed, then he had indeed chosen the infinitely better part. But did I believe? Did the Archbishop himself believe? I saw him, entirely unmoved by Father Jogues's recital, offering his lap-dog a lump of sugar from his coffee, and I could scarce repress my indignation.

Then suddenly overwhelming my sympathy for the missionary and all other considerations, like an inrushing tide came the realisation that Madeleine was exposed to all these dangers, and might even now be a captive in the hands of these devils.

I had thought of her as safe and comparatively comfortable in the fortress of Quebec; but, as I interrogated Father Jogues, he told us that the new mission had been established in the Huron village of Sillery, quite beyond the protection of the garrison.

He had seen her there, caring for the Indian children, who were dying with the smallpox, and happier in these loathsome,

perilous surroundings than when she was the admiration of all France.

More than this he told me, and it was the spark which set fire to my resolve.

He had learned in the Iroquois country that an incursion was to be made upon their hereditary enemies, the Hurons, during the coming season, and not the converted Indians alone, but their devoted teachers and missionaries were in the greatest danger.

He had written to Frontenac, but doubted, even if the information were received, that the heroic little band of Ursulines could be persuaded to abandon their mission.

Not a moment did I sleep that night. The Iroquois would not go upon the war-path, Father Jogues had explained, until midsummer. I would have time to reach Canada if I left at once; and my resolution was quickly taken. The manner of my going alone remained to be decided upon. Should I, after resigning my new sinecure, endeavour to be freed from all religious vows and join the army, or be transferred into the Society of Jesus? Either alternative demanded time, and submitted me to slavery. If I were to save Madeleine at this juncture, I must go at once—and secretly. I therefore delayed only

to speed my guests, not even taking my guardian into my confidence, for I knew how he would oppose the step.

I kept back suspicion and search for a time by telling the Prior of the Abbey that I was going to Paris and would be absent for several weeks, engaged upon matters pertaining to my new appointment, and so left Saint Wandrille for ever.

Disguised as an emigrant, I took passage a few days later in a ship which I was fortunate enough to find about to sail for Canada. But arrived at Quebec, my story of having met Father Jogues was not believed by the Comte de Frontenac.

The Iroquois had sent messengers of peace to the last conference; there seemed to be no danger of an incursion, and no soldiers were posted at the Sillery Mission.

Despairing, powerless to protect the woman I loved, knowing that it would be worse than useless to make myself known to her, I still visited Sillery and talked with the converted Indians. I found them devoted to their missionaries, for whom they had built a chapel and some huts. I warned them of the hostile intentions of the Iroquois, and was comforted by their promise to be on their guard, and to

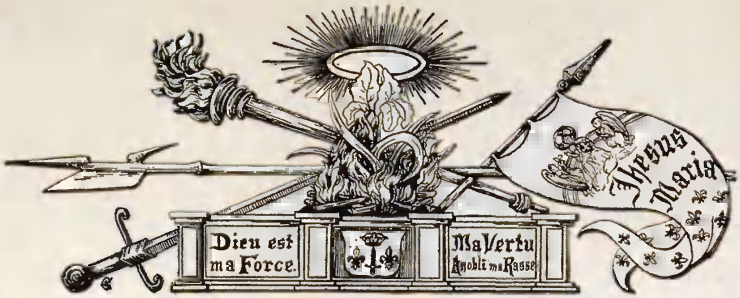
protect their benefactresses with their lives. I spoke to Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, and I saw thee, Madeleine, bending over a sick child, but I left the village, making no sign. I could not, however, leave its neighbourhood, and in reconnoitring the site, I saw that a promontory to the west commanded a view not alone of the village nestling at its foot, but of the reaches of the river. A sentinel posted here could descry the first approach of the war-canoes of the Iroquois, and I resolved to be that sentinel. Here, my Madeleine, I abide in the guise of a hermit. Each morning I behold the smoke curl upward from the rude cabin which serves thee as a cloister; and when I note thy slight figure leading the little Indian girls to the chapel, I kneel before the cross which I have carved in the bark of the tree before the door of my cave and join thee in thy devotions. My gun and my spy-glass stand side by side. I have arranged a series of signals with the Hurons: a pennant from the top of the blasted pine by day, a lantern by night, to tell of the approach of danger. And here I will guard thee and thy work until death do us part.

The story of René de Bernières ended abruptly here.

Upon the envelope in another hand was this endorsement:

"This MS. was discovered buried in a metal box in 'The Hermit's Cave' near Sillery. The locality bore its name from the fact that a human skeleton, supposed to be that of an unknown man, whose presence many years before had provoked much curiosity, had been found here. Its position, with the knees drawn up, and the skull crushed as though by an Indian war-club, seemed to imply that the mysterious stranger had been surprised while sleeping, and had thus met his death at the hands of the Iroquois."

Madame de la Peltrie removed with her companions from Sillery before the incursion, and lived to old age. Her romantic adventures are still related with admiration by the Ursulines of Canada.



CHAPTER XIV

THE SIN OF ABBOT NICOLAS

"La vieillesse couronne et la ruine achève,
Il faut à l'édifice un passé dont on rêve
Deuil, triomphe ou remords.

"Muette en sa douleur Jumiège gravement
Etouffe un triste echo sous son portail Normand,

. . . . . .

Bien souvent le passé couvre plus d'un secret
Dont sur un mur vieilli la tache reparait.
Est ce qu'aucun noir forfait, semé dans ta racine.
Pour jeter quelque jour son ombre à ta ruine,
Ne mêle à tes lauriers son feuillage hideux?"

VICTOR HUGO.

STATELY and masterful the twin towers of the Abbey of Jumièges still dominate in lordly dignity the beautiful ruins of the once powerful monastery, and the long, level reaches of the Abbey seignory, bounded by

RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF JUMIÈGES.
By permission of Levy et Fils.

TOMB AT THE ABBEY OF CLERMONT.

the great loop of the Seine. Rouen lies just to the east, hidden by a purple haze, but as far as the eye can discern all is solitude and peace; the tiny hamlet at the Abbey gate has fallen asleep and the ringing of the reapers' scythes in the meadows is the only sound that strikes the ear. But the roofless ruin is lovingly guarded, the strong Norman towers will resist the tooth of time for many a century, and Jumièges may, perhaps, be the last of the Abbeys to crumble, as she was among the first to rise. For the annals of the Abbey antedate the authentic history of France. Its best-known tradition is that of the coming of the *enervés*, the two rebellious sons of Colodowig II. and Queen Bathilde, who, with the muscles of their legs and arm severed, were laid in an open boat and set adrift upon the Seine, to be carried to their death.

The current brought them, instead, to Jumièges, where the monks received and kindly cared for them in their helplessness. Their tombs are still preserved in the little museum of the Abbey, the mutilated effigies of the Merovingian princes, with their long hair bound by narrow crowns, and their belted robes and mantles witnessing to the origin of the legend.

But another tomb stirs a livelier interest than can be evoked by these almost mythical personages. It is that of the gentle and beautiful Agnes, Lady of the Manor of Mesnil-sous-Jumièges. Of her unpretending home, to which she returned to die, there remains little to reward the sight-seer. Perhaps in her own time it was as unostentatious, curtained from view by purple-tasselled wistaria, a hidden retreat from the burden of magnificent notoriety. The same sweet scents of blossoming lilacs must have environed it, for

> "*L'air du pays et demeurance heureuse*
> *A ne sais je quoi de douceur amoureuse,*
> *Qui laisse au cœur un joyeux souvenir,*
> *Et l'appetit d'y vouloir revenir.*"

Not such the scents which linger in memory as we think of the Abbey of Jumièges. Its beauty of clinging vine and sculptured stone was marred for us that sultry day by an indefinable suffocating odor, vaguely disagreeable, pervasive yet inexplicable.

"It is the smoke from brush-heaps which the peasants are burning in the fields," said the gate-keeper.

"It is our dinner burning uncared-for in the

kitchen," we said to the innkeeper, as we took our seats in the worst hostelry in all Normandy. The Inn of the Enervated Ones, F. persisted in translating the inscription upon its sign-board, declaring that no guest, unless disabled as completely as the two Merovingian princes, could have refrained from fleeing at the first whiff of the fetid fumes which now assailed our nostrils.

"You perceive it, then, a faint but noisome scent of scorching flesh?" remarked a man in black, who, like us, was awaiting service in the dining-room of the inn. "Have no solicitude, it is not your dinner which is being consumed. Do you not detect also the acrid smoke of pitch and the nauseating fumes of sulphur?"

"I cannot analyse its composition," I replied, "but it is the most un-Christian odour which I have ever encountered, and my experience in Italy and France has been comprehensive."

The stranger bowed. "'Un-Christian,' Madame, is its precise designation, for it has to do with a crime—the burnt-offering of the Abbot of Jumièges. He bears the weight of opprobrium, though the sin was shared by all the Norman Abbots of his time, for they saved

their Abbeys from destruction by complicity in the same shameful sacrifice."

Perceiving a story in perspective, we feigned entire ignorance, and the stranger launched eagerly forth, giving, with more of detail than memory serves to reproduce, the substance of the following tale:

Nicolas le Roux, in the early half of the fifteenth century, fifty-ninth Abbot of Jumièges, loved his Abbey more than his own soul, and this he would have confessed, for he counted it to himself as a virtue. It was such a magnificent and venerable Abbey, of such wealth and power and illustrious history that he deeply realised the responsibility as well as the honour of being its ruler and protector in the troublous times which had now fallen upon France.

The King himself had "*droit de gite*" (right of entertainment) at Jumièges, and the royal apartment boasted a *lit de parade* with velvet curtains bordered with ermine, and the very washstand had a velvet petticoat and a silver ewer.

The Abbot well remembered his sovereign's only visit to the Abbey, though he had realised little good from that royal procession, for the King was half-crazed and took no

note of his surroundings. But the Dauphin Charles, who accompanied the party, though a silent lad, inspired the Abbot with hope.

During a hunt in the forest, the prince's pony had gone lame, and as this occurred not far from the Manor of Mesnil recourse was had to its stables for a substitute. A mettlesome palfrey, the Lady Agnes's own, was offered, but seeing how the creature, frightened by the unaccustomed confusion, bit and struggled with the grooms, the timid prince concluded that it was unbroken and dangerous, and feared to mount. Seeing this, the Lady Agnes, at that time a mere slip of a girl, sprang to the side of her pet and quieting it with caresses and sugar, curvetted twice around the haras, Prince Charles regarding her all the time with mingled shame and admiration.

"You are surely not afraid to ride my palfrey now?" she said, as she dismounted before him.

"Nay," he answered sullenly, "I am not afraid to do anything which a maid can do." But as he looked at her and saw that she was not holding him up to ridicule, his pique vanished, and he said more gallantly, "I mean, pretty damsel, that I can do anything if you will but show me the way."

The Prince stopped at the manor to bid her farewell as the royal cortège returned to Rouen.

"Sweet mistress," he said, "will you not leave this wild forest and dwell at Court?"

But the fair Agnes shook her head: "The Court is more dangerous for maids than our forest for princes," she made answer modestly, and the Dauphin watched her yearningly as he rode away.

"I shall come again, my Lord Abbot," he had said as he left Jumièges. "Keep my guest-room ready," and he had sung the old chanson about the sweetness of the air and the longing to return with which it inspired his heart, for no mephitic smoke at that time tainted innocent Jumièges.

Nicolas le Roux built many a hope for his Abbey on this favourable impression. "When the Prince is king he will be our powerful patron," he thought, and in his mind's eye the Abbot saw new and palatial buildings springing up around the antiquated structure.

When the English overran the country he fortified and defended the monastery until, on the fall of Rouen, the terrible Duke of Bedford appeared before Jumièges with a

division of the main army and summoned it to surrender.

"I give myself for my Abbey," said le Roux, as he tendered his submission.

"A worthy peace-offering," replied the duke smoothly, for he had his uses for the Abbot of Jumièges. "You have but to acknowledge, as all of your brother Abbots have done, the spiritual authority of His Grace the Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, and everything else shall remain as it has been."

"Have all the Abbots of Normandy, then, submitted?" asked Nicolas.

"Even to Abbot Jolivet of that strongest Abbey of all, the Mont Saint Michel."

It was true; the cowardly Jolivet was at Rouen, where he had gone to surrender the keys of his fortress monastery; but in his absence his warlike flock repudiated his mission and, resisting for eight years all attacks, kept the Abbey virgin in its loyalty to France. The monastery of Bec, which had garrisoned its donjon-keep with French soldiers, also resisted, but had been put to flame and sword and its Abbot carried a prisoner to Rouen. The other Abbots had attempted no opposition, but looked each other in the

face with no acute feeling of shame as they swore allegiance, for as yet they knew not the dirty work which would be demanded of them.

There was a French ecclesiastic at Rouen, however, whom with one accord his comrades cordially despised. This was Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais.

He, while his city was still in the possession of the French, had turned traitor, and to save himself from the fury of his townspeople had run away to England. Here he had wormed himself into the good graces of the Bishop of Winchester, who had sent the self-exile to Rouen, promising that he should one day be its archbishop if he served England well.

It was not until the capture of Joan of Arc that Winchester drew upon the promissory notes with which the Abbots had ransomed their Abbeys. Her capture alive was the best fortune which could have befallen the English. To her were due all the French victories in the last campaign. It was she who had effected the coronation of Charles VII. at Rheims. The French believed in her divine mission, and she must not die until it was discredited. She must be proved an impostor.

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Joan of Arc.

From a painting by E. W. Joy.
(By permission of Neurdein.)

She had been captured at Compiègne in the diocese of Beauvais, and in the circumstance Winchester saw his opportunity. Joan should be tried by the traitor bishop, for Pierre Cauchon was his creature, body and soul.

Cauchon placed her prosecution in the hands of the Grand Inquisitor of France, and made up his tribunal of judges from French prelates known to be favourable to the English, and among these were the Abbots of eleven Norman Abbeys who had given their submission to the Bishop of Winchester.

When Nicolas le Roux understood at what a price he had purchased the safety of Jumièges he was aghast and would have fled.

"Be not daunted," said the monk Isambard, who had brought him the summons; "I am a Dominican, a servant of the Holy Office, and as such must play my part in this matter. Should not *some* honest men be employed in it? It may be that God has called us to see that justice is done."

This excuse Abbot Nicolas gave to Agnes of Manoir Mesnil when he called upon her to explain his proposed journey. The girl believed in his good faith.

"You will save her," she exclaimed, "even as she has saved France! For indeed with

the great victories of Orléans and Patay, and Charles crowned as king, its salvation is assured. Ah! where is Charles now? He, who boasted here that he could do anything which a maid could do, why has he not followed the example of this glorious maid?"

"With your pardon, sweet mistress," corrected the Abbot, "the Dauphin said rather that he could do anything—if you would show him the way."

"Nay," replied the Lady Agnes, "he hath better counsellors than I, and if he is so inert, so sunk in sloth that he will not heed the voice of his own conscience, neither would he listen to mine. It is for you, my Lord Abbot, to champion the champion of France, and to win the reward of a hero."

Encouraged by the girl's faith, a noble impulse flared in the Abbot's heart, and at the first convocation of the tribunal he rose and impeached the authority of Pierre Cauchon to try the case. "This trial is not legal," he declared, "for the Bishop of Beauvais has acknowledged himself hostile to the prisoner, and is therefore no unbiassed judge. Moreover, he cannot question her divine mission, since that has been already established by his spiritual superior, the Archbishop of

Rheims, from whom the See of Beauvais is holden."

Cauchon was furious and arrested the daring Abbot, who protested that he had no authority to do so as he was under no jurisdiction but that of the Archbishop of Rouen.

But the Duke of Bedford supported Cauchon, and Nicolas le Roux had time in prison for reflection which cooled his ardour. Cauchon was endeavouring to have him condemned to be sewn in a sack and thrown into the Seine; but his brother Abbots bravely demanded his release and the Inquisitor-general insisted that he should take his place upon the tribunal, sending him at the same time a confidential hint that his friends would not be able to save him a second time if he had not the sense to bridle his tongue.

The trial lasted from the 21st of February to the 30th of May, 1431. The court held forty sittings, but on none of these did Nicolas le Roux again attempt to take the part of the poor girl condemned from the outset. Bravely she struggled against the efforts to trap her in her unadvised statements, without counsel, without a single member in that tribunal who knew not that his life was at stake if he attempted to treat

her with fairness. Isambard de la Pierre alone endeavoured to aid her, advising her by signs how to answer her cross-examiners; but, this being discovered, he was rudely expelled from the court-room. This is not the place to follow the iniquities of that process. Every device that fiendish cruelty could imagine was employed against the defenceless girl by the prosecution.

At last the Abbots, troubled in conscience at the thought of condemning her to be burned as a witch, begged her to save her life by signing a paper confessing that she might have been in error as to her visions.

"I had rather sign than burn," she said with a shudder.

This ill-considered mercy of her judges made her condemn herself in the eye of the public. She had been regarded heretofore as a heroine, and every means was now taken by Bedford to give what was called her recantation the utmost publicity. Two stands were erected in the cemetery of the Abbey of Saint Ouen in the centre of Rouen before the door of the Marmousets. On one sat the Bishop of Beauvais, with the Cardinal of Winchester and the court; to the other Joan was conducted, and in the presence of the

multitude signed—not the paper which had been read to her, but, as was afterwards proved, a formal abjuration of her pretensions to her divine mission, and an acknowledgment of the crimes of which she was accused. This paper was read aloud to the audience, but Joan, worn out by her sufferings, neither understood nor heard.

Having confessed, she could not be put to death, but, recovering from her weakness and being told what she had done, she bravely disavowed her abjuration, and two days later, May 30, 1431, the heroic maid was led out through crowds of weeping people, whom ranks of English soldiers kept back, to her death in the market-place.

One friend stood at her side at the scaffold's foot; it was the monk Isambard. No crucifix had been given her, and he rushed into a neighbouring church and brought one from the altar, holding it before her until her death, though Joan herself begged him to step back as the devouring flame shot up between them. Through a rift in that terrible curtain he heard her utter the name of Jesus and saw her head fall forward upon her breast.

The Cardinal Bishop of Winchester wept,

and so did others of her judges, crying, "Woe unto us, we have killed a saint!" And Nicolas le Roux, struck with unavailing remorse, fled from the sight, beating his breast in his despair.

He was rowed in his barge as swiftly as his oarsmen, assisted by the current, could convey him to his Abbey of Jumièges, purchased by his shameful forfeit. At the landing-place, awaiting news from Rouen, was a group of villagers, and among them the Lady Agnes on her white palfrey. She rode quickly to the Abbot, crying, "What tidings, my lord, of the Maid?"

As she listened the blood left her face and surged to it again in indignation. "And you who call yourself a man suffered this? And the King himself, for whom Joan gained so many victories, lifted no hand for her rescue! Then, since manhood exists no longer, France must be saved by its women."

With that word of scorn she left him, nor did the Abbot see her again for many years. The manor-house at Mesnil-sous-Jumièges was deserted, and it was said that its mistress had gone to friends in Touraine.

Meantime a strange transformation had befallen the hitherto indolent and apparently

feeble-minded King of France. Under the influence, so it was rumoured, of a new mistress, his better nature had awakened and he had shown ambition, patriotism, and unsuspected ability. Taking the field in person at the siege of Montereau, he fought in the trenches up to his middle in water, and was the first to mount the scaling-ladders and enter the town, sword in hand.

Province after province was retaken from the English, and in November, 1437, he made his triumphal entry into Paris, and was hailed as Charles the Victorious. Last of all, Rouen surrendered to Dunois, and the English were driven from Normandy.

Charles's first concern after this was to render tardy justice to the memory of the heroine to whom he and France owed so much. Pope Calixtus III. gave his sanction to the "process of rehabilitation" which was begun at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, the Archbishop of Rheims presiding. But it was not enough that Joan should be proclaimed a martyr here; the Court was transferred to the archiepiscopal palace of Rouen, and in the city which had put her to death the articles upon which sentence had been rendered twenty years previously were pronounced

false and calumnious and the process null and of no effect.

It was, moreover, ordained that a eulogy should be delivered in the cemetery of the Abbey of Saint Ouen at the door of the Marmousets, on the very spot where her act of abjuration had been so shamefully obtained, and that on this site and on that of her martyrdom two crosses should be erected in expiation of the crime and to perpetuate her memory.

That this reparation was due not so much to Charles VII. as to the woman who wakened him to wholesome remorse for his neglect the burghers of Rouen understood, for they spread garlands before her as she rode in that expiatory procession, and Nicolas le Roux, the half-crazed Abbot of Jumièges, coming to his Abbey door to welcome his King who claimed again his right of shelter, started to recognise in this "Queen of the left hand" Agnes Sorel, the whilom Lady of the Manor of Mesnil.

"I saved the Abbey for you, my liege," the Abbot had murmured.

"But at what a price!" cried Agnes, and the glance of the Abbot fell.

"Dinner is preparing," he muttered. "For-

ABBEY CHURCH OF SAINT OUEN, ROUEN.
By permission of Levy et Fils.

L'ABBAYE AUX DAMES, CAEN.

give me, my liege, that our dolt of a cook is burning the roast. He always burns it. The stench of scorching flesh pervades the entire Abbey. It is not a perfume for a king's nostrils. Have open the windows. Bid the altar boys bring the censers and sweeten the apartment."

"I perceive naught but the pleasant scent of blossoming lilacs," said the King.

The monks looked at one another significantly, but were silent until the Abbot had bustled away, when one of them took it upon himself to explain.

"So please your royal Highness, there is no joint upon the spit, and the fires are not yet lighted upon the kitchen hearth. Our afflicted Abbot hath been for twenty years like that. When the smoke of the pyre of Joan of Arc ascended, the wind drove it in his face, and it hath never left his nostrils."

It never left them while he lived, which was but a short space longer, hounded to his death by the furies of remorse, who used as their scourge not the fearful sight which he had witnessed nor the heart-breaking cries to which he had listened, but a stranger instrument of torture—the memory of an odour.

The work of Agnes Sorel was accomplished.

She also died the following year at her Manor of Mesnil-sous-Jumièges. Charles VII. placed her body in a magnificent tomb in the chapel of the Château of Loches. But she left her heart to the Abbey of Jumièges, and the inscription upon the slab which covered it may be read to-day:

"Cy gist la noble damoiselle Agnes Sourelle.

"En son vivant dame de Beaulté, piteuse entre toutes gens, et qui largement donnait de ses biens aux églises et aux póuvres, laquelle trespassa le neuvième jour de fevrier l'an de grace 1449."

As the man in black concluded his tale we could not forbear a query. If the Abbot's punishment existed only in his imagination what, then, was this very real odour of burning flesh mingled with sulphur which at present offended our senses?

"Ah! that," replied the stranger, spreading his hands, "our host and others interested in the fair fame of Jumièges will tell you is also a product of the imagination; but we know better. We know," he repeated, "that it is the smoke of the torment of the Abbot Nicolas le Roux, roasting in hell for ever and ever!"

RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF VALMONT, NEAR FÉCAMP.

By permission of Neurdein Frères.

CHAPTER XV

ABBEY PILGRIMAGES

Oh! those old Abbey gardens
With their devices rich,
Their fountains and green, solemn walls,
And saints in many a niche.
I would I could call back again
Those gardens in their pride,
And see, slow walking up and down,
The Abbot dignified.
And the fat monk with sleepy eyes,
Half dozing in his cell;
And him, the poor lay brother,
That loved the flowers so well.
Alas! the Abbey lieth low;
The Abbot's tomb is bare,
And he, the Abbey-gardener,
Is all forgotten there.

MARY HOWITT.

I

A LITTLE TOUR IN NORMANDY

FOR those who would go on pilgrimage, either for the mere joy of wandering in pleasant places or for serious research, no more delightful itineraries could be planned

than the exploration of the most typical and accessible of the French Abbeys.

First of all the reverend brotherhood, stepping from the mainland as though to meet and welcome the trans-Atlantic traveller, we must rank Mont Saint Michel. If one could see but this example he would still have a fair conception of the power of monasticism in mediæval times.

But pre-eminent though it stands, this Abbey is not the first which the tourist will find most convenient to visit.

If he disembarks at Cherbourg it will be easy to stop for a day at Caen, that old Norman city so saturated with memories of William the Conqueror. Here he will find in excellent preservation the Abbaye aux Hommes and the Abbaye aux Dames, which William and Matilda built in penance for their irregular marriage. It was Lanfranc, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who persuaded the Pope to grant them an indulgence, who was first Abbot of the Abbaye aux Hommes, while their daughter, Cécile, became Abbess of the Abbaye aux Dames. Queen Matilda's tomb is in its chapel, and she left its *trésor* her crown and sceptre, the trappings of her saddle-horses, besides

many rich vestments and other objects of value.

Some amusing old rites and customs subsisted here up to the eve of the Revolution. During the fête of Sainte Trinité the Abbess governed the town and garrison, the general in command reporting to her for orders. On the day of the Holy Innocents, the *Fête de la Petite Abbesse* was celebrated, a merry holiday, in which an Abbess of the day was chosen from among the novices, the real Abbess giving up her cross to the new incumbent and submitting to her rule until midnight, when the festival ended in a dance in the convent park.

We visited the Abbey one windy evening in early spring, and as we walked in the grounds were startled to see ghostly forms flitting between the trees, joining hands and leaping wildly as in some frantic Druidical dance.

"Can it be the festival of *la Petite Abbesse*," we asked, "which we have unwittingly chanced upon?"

But on nearer approach a very commonplace explanation was given of the weird phenomenon. It was only the convent linen agitated by the night breeze, the contortions of many flapping sheets striving with their

fastenings and thus grotesquely simulating the dance of the sportive novices.

After Caen one pauses most naturally at Lisieux to enjoy the old timbered houses which lean toward one another like gossiping crones whispering their scandals across the narrow streets. Here, too, one must glance at the cathedral and not miss its beautiful Lady Chapel, the *Chapelle Expiatoire* of Pierre Cauchon, built in remorse for his crime in the prosecution of Joan of Arc. Between Lisieux and Rouen lies the famous Abbey of Bec, but its beautiful tower will scarce repay the ordinary traveller for the inconvenience of its railway connections. It is difficult to go wrong in Normandy, for the province is sown thick with noble châteaux and quaint old towns, while its billowing hills are covered with apple orchards indescribably beautiful in the springtime. But, with the exception of the excursion to Mont Saint Michel and a pause *en route* at Caen, our tourist who is at all limited in time may confine his first itinerary to a driving-trip in the neighbourhood of Rouen. For the principal Norman monasteries are most invitingly grouped around the ancient city, and its magnificent Abbey-church of

The Excommunication of Robert the Pious
From a painting by Jean Paul Laurens

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Saint Ouen makes an excellent centre and point of departure. Its slender columns shoot like lily-stalks from the pavement, framing one hundred and thirty-five glorious windows, set so close together that from within the walls seem built of resplendent gems like those of the heavenly city—"as it were transparent glass."

The cloisters, meadows, gardens, and other dependencies of Saint Ouen originally extended over a large portion of the present city.

"When one thinks," says Quicherat, "that the vast edifice which we call to-day the hotel-de-ville, where the municipal service of more than one hundred thousand souls is installed, is only a fragment of the former Abbey, one comprehends what must in the days of real faith have been the grandeur and power of this celebrated house."

So near to Rouen that it may be visited in an afternoon is the once wealthy Abbey of Saint Georges de Boscherville, founded by Raoul de Tancarville, chamberlain of William the Conqueror. Its power and rank were at all times disproportioned to its size, for it was one of the smallest of the Norman religious communities, never numbering more

than ten brethren. But the Abbot was always of noble birth, and took his seat at great conclaves with the Abbots who ruled a thousand monks.

It has its romance, a tragedy of passion and jealousy and violent death.

On the opposite side of the Seine are the ruins of the castle of Bardouville. Married to its savage lord was an unfortunate lady who had loved and been loved in vain by a certain knight. What parted them is of little moment. They remained "falsely true," and the knight, to be near his lady, became the Abbot of Saint Georges de Boscherville.

Each evening that the baron was absent the baroness signalled her too faithful lover by means of lights, and he crossed the river, swimming it, so the legend asserts, like a second Leander, until the rumour of the torch which flamed in his absence reached the suspicious ears of the husband, and the gallant Abbot was slain in his lady's bower.

The Abbey will afford a purpose for a delightful drive from Rouen through the noble forest of Roumare; but, except for the archæologist, the drive will be found more enjoyable than the end in view, for the chapter house and church are all that are left of the

monastic buildings, the former ruinous and invaded by the cows of a neighbouring dairy-farm, and the decorations which graced the interior of the latter hidden under barbarous whitewash.

A little farther to the west the Seine makes a great sweep to embrace the still stately ruins of the Abbey of Jumièges, which may be visited from Rouen by steam launch or by the circuitous railroad.

En route from Jumièges to Saint Wandrille one should not fail to pause at Caudebec, famous for its high tides and its exquisite spire, and for the most comfortable hostelry in all this region. Saint Wandrille will tempt the artist to remain an entire season and fill his portfolios, and the inn of Caudebec is near enough to make this possible.

From Saint Wandrille the pilgrim should press on to Fécamp, whose old Abbey-church with its wonderful *jubé* is quite eclipsed by the "fake" Abbey, which has proved so clever an advertisement of the liqueur Benedictine. The monks were expelled at the time of the Revolution, but their recipe, it is pretended, was handed down to his children by the former steward of the Abbey, and an immense fortune has been realised from its fabrication. An

amusing scene is depicted in a stained-glass window of the mock Abbey. The founder of the distillery grasps the globe with one plump hand, while he extends the other for the sacred recipe which is given him by an angel!

More or less authentic antiquities, said to have once graced the ancient Abbey, are distributed throughout the theatrical building, which flaunts a chapter house and even a chapel; but the architect who created this phantasmagoria could hardly have imagined that the most naïve could take his jest seriously and fancy that he is treading the halls of the veritable monastery.

The legend which led to the founding of the Abbey of Fécamp affirms that Joseph of Arimathea finding, after assisting in the deposition from the cross, that his glove contained some drops of the blood of Christ, concealed it in a hollow in a fig-tree which grew in his garden at Sidon. In process of time the tree was cut down and with its hidden treasure cast into the sea.

A holy hermit in Gaul saw this in a vision, and was bidden to resort to the seashore and to watch for the fig-tree which would be miraculously carried to Normandy. Here indeed it was washed ashore, and the place

RUINS OF ABBEY OF VALMONT—INTERIOR.

Victor Hugo writes in *Notre Dame de Paris*. Of all the Abbeys which we sought in our pilgrimage, this was the only one which we found guarded by an inexorable dragon. True he belched no flame, but neither would he swallow a golden bribe. With deplorable fidelity to his master's orders, he replied with monotonous reiteration, "I am desolated not to oblige madame, but what can I do? *On ne visite pas.*"

Instantly the reputed glories, treasures of Valmont, its carvings by Germain Pilon, and the tombs of its Abbots, took on an overweening importance, and all the privileges which we had hitherto enjoyed through the uniform courtesy and hospitality of other strangers were as nothing to this single refusal.

Between Rouen and Paris, if one cares sufficiently for Richard Cœur de Lion to visit his castle of Gaillard, one may pause first at Pont de l'Arche for the drive to his Abbey of Bonport, which he founded in 1190. The refectory still exists, but the carved choir-stalls and beautiful glass have been removed to the parish church of Pont de l'Arche.

There are remains of many other interesting Abbeys in Normandy, but none which will so

well repay a visit as the group already mentioned.

The monastery of La Trappe recalls a romance unparalleled in fiction, but at the time of its founding this Abbey sought for the most inaccessible spot in southern Normandy. Such it remains to-day, for the railroads avoid its solitude and few admirers of the Abbé de Rancé will brave the inconveniences of the journey to discover the austere retreat rendered famous by his long penance. Another building as intimately connected with his tragic history attracts the attention of every traveller who approaches Loches from the city of Tours, and stands as a significant illustration to the pitiable story.

II

THE STRANGE STORY OF THE ABBÉ DE RANCÉ

Tout Chartreux est un volcan eteint

GUADET.

And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.

LOWELL.

Sinister and formidable even in its ruin the donjon keep of Montbazon is pointed out

as one of the earliest feudal castles of Touraine, built by Foulques Nerra to protect his territory from the Counts of Blois.

On the summit of the ancient tower there has been erected a colossal image of the Virgin, for it is now a shrine of pilgrimage, and humble penitents kneel amid the ruins beseeching Our Lady of Pity to save their sons from such a temptress, and their daughters from the guilt and the fate of the wicked Duchess of Montbazon. It was close at hand in her favourite bower, the dainty manor-house of Couzières, that she met and loved the Abbé de Rancé and paid the penalty of her guilt.

The Abbé possessed the neighbouring seignory of Veretz, and had built himself a hermitage in the great game-abounding forest. Let no one, deceived by the word, picture a rocky cell beside a rill of clear-flowing water, for the "hermitage" was a *château de chasse*, with stables and kennels, and later Rancé sold the estate for the equivalent of a hundred thousand dollars. He had inherited it from his mother, his clerical duties at the Chateau of Blois were merely nominal, and he spent much of his time in hunting at Veretz.

RUINS OF THE ABBEY OF LA VICTOIRE.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

DONJON OF THE CHÂTEAU OF MONTBAZON.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

Armand Jean Le Bouthillier de Rancé was such a man at this time as Browning describes in *Caponsacchi:*

"A courtly, spiritual cupid,
And fit companion for the like of you—
You gay Abati with the well-turned legs
And rose i' the hat-rim, canon's cross at neck,
And silk-mask in the pocket of the gown."

And yet his was not a gross nature. A precocious scholar, he published at twelve a translation of the odes of Anacreon, and in taking his degrees excelled his classmate Bossuet. Named for Richelieu, it was expected that his godfather's influence would be enlisted in his behalf, but the cardinal died and he had not been appointed to the bishopric, which he expected.

So Rancé, with no great career to tempt his powers, lived a life of idle elegance and refinement until he met the Duchesse de Montbazon.

Fifty-two years younger than her husband, mad for admiration and an adept in the arts of acquiring it, she seemed to the young man the embodiment of all feminine perfection. She found his adoration amusing in that uneventful château life, for she was a woman

who could not forbear from ruining any man of attractive personality who came within her power. But the death of her husband, Duke Hercules de Montbazon, was to give her a wider field, and the duchess at once established herself at Paris, creating continual scandals at the very formal Court, where she took an insane delight in violating etiquette. The Cardinal de Retz wrote of her: "Madame de Montbazon was very beautiful, but modesty was wanting to her attractions. I never saw any one, even in vice, who had preserved so little respect for virtue." Such audacity was at least piquant, and very soon she had more lovers and was involved in more mischief than any other woman in Paris.

Into this dissolute, reckless life the Abbé de Rancé followed the duchess. His father had died and his revenues, greatly increased, enabled him to cut a figure as a man of fashion. He maintained a train of servants and eight coach horses. While in ecclesiastical society he dressed in black velvet, at the soirees of the duchess he appeared in heliotrope or violet brocade, set off with costly laces and great emeralds.

The Abbé had a rival in the Duke of Beaufort, one of the leaders of the Fronde, and it

was to advance his interests that the Duchess of Montbazon threw herself into that conspiracy.

Vain, shallow, and selfish, he had still the make-up of a stage hero, with the art of ingratiating himself with the populace and the perception to recognise their power. He was called *le Roi des Halles* (King of the Markets), and the terrible fishwives whose descendants were to drag Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette from Versailles, worshipped him as the champion of their interests because he resided in their quarter and harangued them in their argot. But Mazarin's spies kept him informed of Beaufort's incendiary speeches and of the plots at the salons of Madame de Montbazon, and using as a pretext a notorious duel which that agitating lady had incited, he banished her to her estates in Touraine.

The Duke of Beaufort was too great a favourite with the people to be dealt with openly, and too dangerous and treacherous a man to be permitted to remain in France. The cardinal cleverly gave him an appointment which was virtual banishment and possible condemnation to death, making him admiral of the French fleet which sailed in

1669 with seven thousand troops for the relief of the Venetians beseiged in Candia by the Turks. The night of the landing, when the French forces attempted to cut their way through the infidels, Beaufort disappeared in the mêlée, probably one of the unnumbered dead left upon the field by that frightful slaughter. But the women of the halles could never be persuaded that their leader was dead. For years they had masses said—not for the repose of his soul, but for his return, believing that he had been spirited away from the field by the agents of Mazarin.[1]

The affection of the Duchess of Montbazon was not so constant as that of the ignorant fishwives. Even before the Duke of Beaufort sailed he was dead to her and from the list of her lovers she elected that the Abbé de Rancé should supply his place. He had loved her without hope in her prosperity and would not desert her now.

The management of his estate of Veretz gave the excuse for long rides and for secret interviews, until swift and terrible retribution fell upon them from the hand of God.

[1] Some authorities take this view and maintain that he was confined in the fortress of Pignerol, being none other than the prisoner known as the Man in the Iron Mask.

The Abbé had come one day to his tryst at the manor, and had tripped jauntily up the secret staircase to his lady's boudoir. She was not there, but a great silver chafing-dish, from which she had often regaled him with some dainty prepared by her own fair hands, stood as though waiting for him upon the table. He raised the cover, and to his horror was confronted by the dissevered head of his mistress, the fair locks sodden with blood, forming a gory frame for features distorted by the death-agony. Rancé's reason forsook him at the fearful sight. Grasping the dish he fled demented with it into the forest, and wandered, how long and where he never knew.

It seemed to him that he had ventured into hell in search of his murdered love and was fleeing through floods of flame with her corpse tightly clasped against his heart, and that ghastly face close to his own.

When at last he came to himself he was in the ruined donjon of Montbazon. Was it all a hideous dream and would he hear her ringing laugh in a moment? He raised his hands to his head and saw that his lace ruffles were dabbled with dark spots, and at the same time an odd metallic sound, like the tinkling of a tiny bell sounded behind him. The great

tower was roofless, an ivy-lined wall in which rooks built their nests. They were circling and cawing as though in response to the call of that weird bell, and turning he saw upon a heap of débris the silver vessel, against whose cover an enormous raven was striking his hard beak. Driving away the bird, but unable to look again upon that terrible face, he buried the dish and its contents beneath a pile of stones, and kneeling in the solitude repeated over it the service for the dead.

From that day the Abbé Rancé was a changed man. It was not enough to devote himself henceforth to the duties of his sacred calling. Conscience made terrible reclamations, and as his sin had been great so he set himself no ordinary, easy penance.

Among his many benefices he possessed the charge of the monastery of La Trappe in Normandy. In a bleak situation, without endowment, the monks had deserted its cloisters; only seven remained in the ruinous building, and these were unworthy of their order, poaching the fallow deer, feasting on fast days, drinking and gaming in the refectory, and sharing their evil pleasures with abandoned women, as though the devil himself were their prior. Rancé formed the design

of reforming the entire order of the Citeaux, and made a journey to Rome to obtain the Pope's sanction; but the pontiff was not in sympathy with this new Savonarola and gave him no authority beyond his own community of La Trappe. Unshaken in his determination, he returned to France and sold his possessions, endowing two hospitals in Paris. He then retired to the poverty and solitude of his monastery, reviving the strict rule of Saint Bernard with long vigils, rigorous fasts, exhausting labour, flagellation, eternal silence, and the daily digging of his grave with his own hands. For thirty-seven years he endured this living death, and other repentant sinners flocked to share his self-crucifixion, so that whereas he had found but seven reprobates in the convent, he left in it at his death one hundred and ninety-seven true penitents. It was remorse and the fear of judgment to come which had driven them from the world and was ever present with their founder as he knelt in his cell before a ghastly skull, said to be that of the woman whom he had loved, for the peace of whose soul he prayed continually, and whose evil name, in spite of his life of expiation, will ever be linked with his own. (See Note A.)

The Abbé's romance was well known and had much to do with giving La Trappe its vogue, but in the following century, as the sentimental interest in the Abbey increased, the desire of actually following Rancé's example diminished.

When Dorat wrote his poem of La Trappe, based on the romantic history of the Comte de Comminges, as related by Madame de Tencin, it was as a protest against the rigours of the old faith, and though an anti-climax to the tragedy of de Rancé, the trifle is significant of the current of opinion. The plot of the poem is briefly as follows:

The Comte de Comminges loves Adelaide, daughter of the Marquis de Lussan, who returns his affection, but through misunderstanding is married to the Marquis de Benavidés.

Comminges in despair becomes a monk of La Trappe.

Adelaide learning this, not with any intention of intrigue but simply to be near her beloved, disguises herself as a man, and also taking the vows, becomes an inmate of the same monastery. Her identity is unknown even to her lover, who remarks only (so he is supposed to write his mother) the sympathy

L'ABBÉ DE RANCÉ.

ROMANCE OF THE COMTE DE COMMINGES.
From an engraving by Eisen.

written in the face of a young novice by whom he is continually followed.

One day, while digging his own grave, the count pauses and traces in the sand with his spade the name of Adelaide.

He hears sobs and at last recognises his lady.

After this there is nothing in honour for the lovelorn count to do but to die, a performance which he accomplishes with despatch and due deference to dramatic effect.

The poem is thoroughly artificial in its sentimentality. It is difficult to believe that tears were shed on the following lines:

"Au bord d'un lac tranquille
Je travaillois un soir a mon dernier asyle,
Je creusois mon cercueil, en moi même absorbé
Je restais quelque tems sur ma bêche courbé,
Ma main, dans ce moment, incertaine timide,
Sur le sable imprima le nom d'Adelaide."

The lackadaisical pose of the count in Eisen's dainty engraving, his petticoats draped like a ballet-dancer's, provokes in our day amusement rather than sympathy.

We have drifted still further down the stream, and the conclusion of the poem seems to us trite and banal, but we forget that at the time it may have taken some courage to

have enunciated it in the face of the example and doctrine of La Trappe:

"Ce Dieu que l'on peint de ses foudres armé
Est un Dieu bienfaisant, qui veut etre aimé
Deja s'ouvre à tes yeux l'eternité brillante,
Adore et sers un Dieu qui le rend ton Amant."

III

IN EASTERN FRANCE

This fortification
Grew from the ruins of an ancient Abbey.

. . . . . .

I do love these ancient ruins.
We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history;
And, questionless, here in this open court
Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather, some men lie interred,
Loved the Church so well, and gave so largely to it,
They thought it should have canopied their bones
Till doom's day; but all things have their end;
Churches and Abbeys, which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death that we have.

JOHN WEBSTER in *The Duchess of Malfi.*

The little tour in Normandy which we have outlined needs no previous preparation of deep scholastic research to make it of

interest to the tourist. The charm of the mere picturesque aspect of the ruins of Jumièges and Saint Wandrille will win any heart, however indifferent. The beauty of Saint Ouen and the grandeur of Mont Saint Michel are equally impressive, but a pilgrimage in the east of France is more particularly recommended to those who know beforehand what they seek and where to find their peculiar predilection, for in the feast which is spread from Lorraine to the Mediterranean there are delicacies to suit every taste.

The wild beauty of the Desert of La Grande Chartreuse and the loveliness of the Abbey of Hautcombe on the blue lake of Le Bourget in Savoy, the savage grandeur of La Chaise Dieu, and the spectacular picturesqueness of Le Puy in Auvergne, will best please the artist, while the architect will find more satisfying the exquisite Gothic church of Brou and the Romanesque buildings of the Rhone Valley, especially in the neighbourhood of Avignon and Arles. The historical student will delight in less pictorial scenes, each crumbling wall of Languedoc and Burgundy affording illustration to many a familiar page and stimulating both memory and imagination.

The limitations of the present volume will not permit of even a cursory survey of the field: its aim is but to suggest more serious study and thorough exploration.

Among the hundreds of statues of the Abbey of Hautecombe, where sleep the princes and princesses of Savoy, the sculptured faces of Yolande, of Aloise, of Sibylle, and of Bonne will set the poet's fancy dreaming "in praise of ladies dead."

The monks who drop upon their knees beside these marble tombs, protected by international treaty even at this writing (1905) in their vows of perpetual prayer for the souls of the departed, are among the very few whom he will find in their old accustomed haunts.

The ancient fortified Abbey of "The Seat of God" will justify its name from its mountain throne, at whose foot the humbler edifices of the little town seem to kneel in homage. Its donjon-keep proclaims the struggles of its Abbots with the rapacious neighbouring seigneurs, and, like many an old commandery of the religious military orders, still seems to chant its "*Benedictus Deus meus qui docet manas meas ad prœlium et digitos meos ad bellum.*"

This Abbey of La Chaise Dieu was prison as well as fortress; its aspect of bleak austerity and loneliness well explains the feeling of its Commendatory Abbot, Cardinal de Rohan, prince and peer of the realm, who is reported to have said scornfully: "I have, as you say, an old Abbey somewhere in the mountains of Auvergne, just where, I do not quite know; I do know, however, that it possesses an entire county which yields me a very fair income, and while there are pretty women at Court be assured that this is all I ask of it."

This assertion is supposed to have been made a few months before the scandal of the diamond necklace flamed forth, when the dissolute prelate, who dared to insult Marie Antoinette, was banished to La Chaise Dieu as to perpetual imprisonment.

The city of Avignon, with its papal palace, which Froissart called *la plus forte et la plus belle maison en France*, will furnish another mine of treasure in its souvenirs of the French pontiffs. Vaucluse, with Petrarch and Laura, is close at hand, while across the river, partly spanned by the broken bridge, is the ancient Chartreuse, an Abbey invaded by a colony of gypsies, whose donkeys are stabled in the chapel.

The Bridge of Saint Nicolas suggests an entire chapter on the Frères Pontifes (*Pont ifex*, bridge-builder), who banded themselves together "to build churches and hospices along the routes, to render roads practicable, and particularly to construct bridges over rivers." This confrérie was bound by the vow of obedience, in that they must assemble when called, and by poverty, in receiving no recompense for their labours, but they were allowed to marry and to return to their homes when their services were not required. They spread all over Europe, their special aim being to make easy the pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Their most celebrated bridge over the Rhone, the Pont Saint Esprit, was finished in 1307, and still exists. It is eight hundred metres in length, with twenty great arches, each twenty metres in span. There are bastides at each end, and anciently there were two towers in the middle, in one of which was placed an altar to Saint Nicolas, the patron of all ferries and bridges. These towers were removed in 1850, as the navigation of the river demanded that the two central arches should be replaced by a great iron one. The hospice built here for pilgrims became the headquarters of the Order, a

Cité hospitaliere, with a special quarter quarantined for the pest, and an atelier for instruction in the mechanic arts.

The devout Catholic will find in the south of France shrines of pilgrimage hallowed by association with the greatest saints of the calendar. Not alone French saints, such as Bruno, who founded La Grande Chartreuse in 1084, and Bernard of Clairvaux, but others whom we are accustomed to associate with Italy,—Saint Francis of Assisi, whose footsteps we have traced in the neighbourhood of Arles; Saint Dominic, "Defender of the Faith," whose mistaken zeal led the crusade against the Albigenses, but is lovingly remembered in Toulouse as having there received the vision of the Virgin that inspired the institution of the rosary, which has guided the devotions of millions of fervent souls.

Saint Anthony is claimed at picturesque Le Puy, at the Abbey of Fontefroide (beloved by Viollet le Duc) near Narbonne, and in the neighbourhood of Limoges. Here, as in Portugal, he provides good husbands for maidens who on his fête place lighted candles at his shrine, and those destined to an early grave he betroths to himself, appearing to them in person.

Indeed France is as jealous of Italy as is the good saint's native country, Portugal, where among many souvenirs of his youth and early manhood the following curious certificate of his military service is treasured:

"I attest and certify"—(wrote Don Hercules Antonio Charles Luiz Joseph Maria de Albuquerque Aranjo de Magalhaens Homen, nobleman, knight, etc., etc.)—"that the Lord Saint Antonio, otherwise the great Saint Antonio of Lisbon (commonly and *falsely called of Padua*) has been enlisted in this regiment since the 24th of January, 1268. The said Saint Antonio gave for his caution and surety the Queen of Angels, who became answerable that he would not desert his colours, but behave always like a good soldier. . . .

"I do further certify that there is no record of bad behaviour committed by him nor of his having ever been flogged or in any way punished while a private in his regiment, and that in every respect he has always behaved like a gentleman, and on all the above mentioned accounts I hold him most deserving of the rank of major to our regiment. In testimony whereof I have hereto signed my name this 25th day of March of the year of our Lord 1277.

"MAGALHAENS HOMEN."

If our pilgrim is a historian and would touch the very foundation of the Abbey institution, he must go to Italy, for it was

Saint Benedict who in the year 528 organised the hermit monks into a *convent* (corporation) on Mont Cassin, thus creating the Order of the Benedictines, who were to evangelise and educate Europe.

So early as 543, however, Saint Benedict's disciple, Saint Maure, with four companions, introduced the rule into France, founding the Abbey of Saint Maure sur Loire, near the city of Tours.

The Comte de Montalembert, in his *Monks of the West*, shows us the wonderful work of monasticism up to the birth of Bernard (1091). The eleventh century was one of miracle, and it is here that the author has chosen to begin her study of the Abbeys. For the year 1000 A.D. had been anticipated as the millenium, the end of the world, and the *Dies Iræ*, written by a pious monk, represented its expectation.

Robert the Pious was King of France and his conscience was not at peace, for he had wedded in defiance of the Church. In terror of its excommunication he gave up his wife and as Michelet wrote, his obedience seemed to the nation to have disarmed the divine anger and to have brought in the peace of God. When the eleventh century dawned

and the heavens and earth shrivelled not in flame, the nation as well as the monarch seemed, in thankfulness, to have entered upon a new life. From this point it is to the dominant Abbey of Cluny that we must look for the history of the first century of this great revival. Other Abbeys may be dismissed with a word, or altogether ignored, but it is impossible to understand the institution of monasticism in France without a knowledge of the history of the great house which was its very heart.

IV

THE ABBEY OF CLUNY

O happy harbour of God's saints,
O sweet and pleasant soil,
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant plants
As nowhere else are seen.

BERNARD OF CLUNY.

Phenomenal indeed was the growth of this wonderful Abbey from the year 909, when the Duke of Aquitaine founded it by donating

PALACE OF THE POPE GELASE, AT THE ABBEY OF CLUNY.

the fief of Cluny to twelve Benedictine monks. His will, with its naïve statements of his motives in making the gift, is a curious document, illustrative of the temper of mind of the time.

"I, William, Count and Duke, and Ingelberge my wife, have thought it well to dispose for the profit of my soul of some of my riches. I can not do better in this regard than to follow the precept of our Lord and make to myself friends among the poor, by prolonging perpetually my benefits to monks whom I shall nourish, hoping that if I do not myself sufficiently despise the things of this world, I may still receive the recompense of the just, since the monks contemners of the world shall receive of my liberality.

"This is why I give and bequeath to the holy apostles Peter and Paul all that I possess at Cluny—to wit, the chapel, the farms, slaves of both sexes, vineyards, fields, forests, waters, and mills without reserve.

"I give these things to the said apostles, I, William, and my wife Ingelberge, for the safety of our souls and those of all our relatives. And finally as we are united to all Christians by the same faith, this donation is made for all the orthodox of the past, present, and future.

"We order that our donation shall serve to furnish a refuge to the poor, and that the monks and all things mentioned herein be under the domination of the Abbot Bernon. But after his death that the monks have the right to elect the master of their order.

"That they pay annually for five years to Rome ten golden sous for the lighting of the Church of the Apostles and placing themselves thus under the protection of the said apostles, and having for their defender the Pontiff of Rome, they build themselves a monastery at Cluny in the measure of their power and knowledge.

"We will also that Cluny shall be open each day by works of mercy to the poor, to strangers, and to pilgrims.

"It pleases us to ordain that from this day the monks of Cluny are fully affranchised from our power and that of our family, and shall never be subject either to the royal power, or to the yoke of any terrestrial sovereignty. By God and all the saints and under menace of the last judgment I forbid all secular princes and the Pontiff of the Roman Church himself to invade the possessions of the servitors of God; and I conjure you, O holy apostles Peter and Paul, and thou pontiff of the apostolic see, to withold from the communion of the Church and from the life everlasting all violators of my evident intention. Be defenders of Cluny, and if any one, my relative or a stranger, by any ruse attempt to render void this testament, may God remove him from the living on earth, and his name from the book of life. Let him become the companion of Judas in the torments of damnation. That he be compelled, moreover, by earthly law to pay an hundred pounds of gold to the monks whom he strives to attack. And that this testaament remain forever inviolable in all its stipulations.

"Done publicly in the city of Bourges, etc."

In scarce a century from its establishment, the domination of Cluny extended over three hundred and forty religious houses, and the Abbot was a temporal prince.

Great factories grouped themselves around the monastery: bakers, horticulturists, weavers, shoe-makers, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths and cabinet-makers perfected their crafts.

From 1089 to 1131 the artisan monks built their famous church, the largest in Christendom with the exception of Saint Peter's at Rome.[1] and at this period sent out her building monks to erect other Abbeys in the style of the *maison-mère*, not in France alone, but to England, to Italy, and to Germany as well.

The style in which they builded — the Burgundian Romanesque — remained pre-eminent in monastic architecture long after the Gothic had superseded it in the great cathedrals. It was derived from the buildings erected in the Rhone Valley by the Romans and can be studied side by side with the original models. The barrel vault and low, round arches, supported by columns which

[1] The church was 171 metres in length. Saint Peter's is 183 metres, Saint Paul's in London only 166.

appeared to have been stunted and sometimes contorted by the weight of the superstructure, expressed everlasting durability, a relentless severity, and inexorable gloom, which comported well with monastic ideas. The domination of the hierarchy was as much a legacy from Roman masterfulness as the architecture of the basilica. Something of the Christian character must, however, be grafted on the classical structure, and over the main doorway there was always a rudely carven representation of the last Judgment. The most terrible of all we found at the Abbey church of Moissac, where the imagination of the sculptor was allowed the utmost licence in depicting the tortures of the damned.

The gargoyles which from under the eaves spouted water upon unwary passers it was claimed represented evil spirits driven from the sacred edifice, but the devils reappeared again in the beautiful cloister and took possession of the capitals of the columns. Saint Bernard alone thought of satirising these grotesques:

"What," he asks, "do these ridiculous monstrosities accomplish for the brothers reading in the cloister? Why are the filthy apes there? and the savage lions? Why the monstrous centaurs, and the half-human

CLOISTER OF THE ABBEY OF FONTEFROIDE.
By permission of Paul Robert.

CLOISTER OF THE ABBEY OF MOISSAC.

figures? You may see there one body under many heads, or again many bodies with one head. On one side is shown the tail of a serpent on a quadruped; on the other a quadruped's head on a fish. There is a beast like a horse in the fore part and a goat behind; here is a horned animal with the hinder part of a horse.

. . . . . .

"For God's sake, even if one is not ashamed of such absurdities, why is he not distressed at the cost of them?"

The cost in no way troubled the Cluniac architects, but they had another cause for alarm. At the very moment of their highest success another style, the ogival or Gothic, was perfected in central France and was adopted for the great cathedrals.

It was impossible that the superior advantages of the rival system should not in time be recognised even at Cluny itself, and so at last the pointed arch crept into her chapels and will be found side by side with her own distinctive architecture.

It is for these reasons that this Abbey is the most interesting in all France to the architect.

And yet it is not so much what the visitor can actually see at Cluny as what one can read into its fast-disappearing fragments which is so significant. A sordid provincial

town has been allowed to invade the dead monastery,—to cut streets through its church and to burrow with shops many of its noble buildings, as a foul river might have eaten them away or choked them with slime. From the very heart of the Abbey, however, the ignoble inundation has been sluiced and dyked as from an island rescued from the torrent, and kept sacred to the traditions of the past.

We arrived from Mâcon on a market-day; every courtyard was filled with the carts of peasants, and down the narrow streets came charging herds of the great tawny and white cattle for which the Charollais is famous. Dashing into doorways we escaped the hoofs and horns of the stampede, but not from the clamour of their blue-bloused masters, who filled the only inn to suffocation and wrangled over their strong Burgundy. To what God-forsaken spot have we come? was our first query, but it needed only a glance at the Chapel of Jean de Bourbon and the Tour de l'Eau Benite to change the scoffers to devotees.

Forsaken of God indeed must their Abbey have seemed to the dazed monks who saw the wonderful church demolished when its mere débris fills the architect's heart with

amazement. Two small palaces also remain which are gems in their way, the *logis abbatiales* of Jean de Bourbon and Jacques d' Amboise, who built the Cluny Palace in Paris as the city residence of the Abbots of Cluny.

One other palace, called that of the Pope Gerlase, a part only of the suite of buildings kept as guest-chambers, exists in a mutilated and badly restored condition. There was need for this extensive provision for hospitality, for:

"In 1245," says the ancient chronicle, "the Pope [Innocent IV.], with all his Court, the Bishop of Senlis and his household; the Bishop of Evreux with his retinue; our sovereign lord the King of France [Saint Louis], with his mother, his brother, his sister, and all their following; the Emperor of Constantinople and his Court; the son of the King of Aragon with his suite; the son of the King of Castile with his; and many other knights and clergy were entertained at the same time within the monastery.

"And in spite of this great number of guests not one of its three hundred monks was displaced from his dormitory, refectory, infirmary, or chapter house, or his cuisine in any way changed."

When Napoleon passed through Burgundy on his way to receive at Milan the iron crown, he was met at Mâcon by a deputation of the

municipality of Cluny, who begged him to honour their town by a visit. He is said to have replied brusquely: "You have allowed your magnificent church to be sold and destroyed. You are a horde of Vandals, and I shall never visit Cluny."

A careful examination of the facts of history shows that the Emperor grievously wronged the town. It was against the protest of the municipality that the Abbey was sold by the National Government to some merchants of Mâcon. Liberty was given to the purchasers to do what they chose with their property, and the beautiful vaults and arches reared with such munificence and devotion were blown up with gunpowder and the materials sold for the basest uses. Seventy-five blasts were necessary to overthrow the Tour des Bisans, the mate of the Holy Water Tower still standing, and nine days of mining before the façade fell.

The town still persisted in its attempt to save what it could. It possessed meadows in the suburbs which, with its markets, it exchanged in 1801 for a part of the Abbey.

It was not until 1865 that the Minister of Public Instruction decided to create a new department, that of Industrial Art, when the

Municipal Council of Cluny immediately offered the Government the Abbey buildings and grounds for its new school. No use more in harmony with its original purpose could have been made of the Abbey which so greatly developed the building arts. To-day the collections and ateliers of the École Nationale des Arts et des Métiers takes the place of the rude workshops of the craftsmen-monks.

Frère Placide died in the bitterness of his soul when his masterpiece was broken up, but may we not believe that the Abbey is haunted by a happy ghost who at last "sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied."

It must not be imagined that, because Cluny was so largely a prime mover in the arts and crafts, she held no scholastic or literary rank. While the Benedictines of Saint Maur were pre-eminent as historians, and the Abbey of Saint Martin of Tours has a wider reputation for the artistry of its illuminations, at the end of the eleventh century Cluny had become the "capital of the intellectual life of all Europe." Three of her monks became popes, Urban II., Pascal II., and in 1049 she sent to Rome him whom his enemies nicknamed Hildebrand (the brand of hell), who, at first superior only of the

Monastery of St. Paul without the Gates, was to become Pope Gregory VII., the most fearless, zealous, and most masterful ruler who ever sat in Saint Peter's chair. It was his ambition, in great part realised, to make the Catholic Church the mistress of the nations, even as Cluny was queen of her dependent priories.

Besides its immense Abbey, Cluny possessed a college for her scholars near the Sorbonne at Paris, where they could arm themselves with the new methods of philosophy taught by Abelard, a college also at Dole, and one at Avignon which connected the Abbey intimately with the papal court.

We may come very closely into touch with the schoolmen of Cluny through a most fortunate theft, which preserved from destruction a large portion of her library. At the time of the Revolution an historical commission was created, charged with the task of selecting from the archives of all monasteries whatever matter might be of interest to French history, and some eight hundred MSS. were transferred to the Bibliotheque National at Paris. (See Note B.)

In the Abbacy of Peter the Venerable (1122–1158), Cluny reached its high-water mark. She had achieved power and distinction. The

Abbot Pons, immediately preceding Peter, carried the sacred spear at the head of the Christian army and put to rout the Saracens at Ybelin, so saving Palestine. Saint Denis was the only Abbey in France that could compare with her in honour, for the King of France himself did feudal service at Saint Denis, from which he acknowledged to hold Vexin as a fief, but Saint Denis was ranked after Cluny, whose Abbot disputed with that of Monte Cassino in Italy the title of Abbot of Abbots.

Affairs of great political moment were referred to the arbitration of Peter the Venerable, notably the treaty between Aragon and Castile which restored peace to Spain and left it free later to combat the Mohammedans.

It was, however, the personal character of Peter which conferred honour upon Cluny and not his position which dignified the man.

Closely allied with him we encounter at this period two other equally remarkable Abbots and schoolmen, Saint Bernard and Abelard, who were to be epoch making in the history of the Church and the nation.

Peter could comprehend the widely different points of view of his friends better than

they could understand him, and while they loved him they could neither love nor understand each other. Bernard was a mystic as bigoted as he was sincere, and Abelard a radical and an agnostic. Peter possessed the rarest, because the broadest, mind; fervently devout and orthodox, he exhaled a sweet Christian benignity. "The rule of Benedict," he wrote Bernard, "is always subordinate to the law of charity."

But Bernard could not agree with him, and it was due to his relentless animosity that the Council of Sens declared Abelard a heretic.

Peter the Venerable must have believed that Abelard's views were strangely warped, but he respected him as honest, and when trouble fell upon him dared to open the doors of Cluny to him as an asylum.

The student who would follow Abelard's footsteps from the beginning to the end of his checkered career will seek for his first traces in Brittany in the remains of the celebrated Abbey of Saint Gildas de Rhuys.

> "In the diocese of Vannes
> On the grey rocks of Morbihan
> The very sea-shore where
> In his great despair
> Abbot Abelard walked to and fro.

Whilst overhead
The convent windows gleamed as red
As the fiery eyes of the monks within,
Who with jovial din
Gave themselves up to all kinds of sin."

The region in midsummer will well repay a visit, for on the 26th of July at the neighbouring Sainte Anne d'Auray is held the most interesting of the "Pardons," a festival half religious pilgrimage and half popular fête, which attracts the Brittany peasantry in all the glory of their holiday costumes.

The old Castle of Sucinio, with whose lord Abelard was embroiled, still gives a vivid picture of feudal times; but with the exception of its chapel, which is now the parish church, there is scarcely a trace of the monastery of which Longfellow wrote.

There is still less to remind one of Abelard at Paraclete, the Abbey built for him by his students, and which he later gave to Heloise as a retreat for the community of nuns of whom she was the adored Abbess.

But it is here at Cluny, walking in the still beautiful garden of the friendly Abbot, that we have the clearest vision of that storm-tossed man. It was here that he must have written for her the touching hymn, *At*

Vespers. Its internal evidence, not alone the reference to Bernard of Cluny's *Jerusalem*, but the weariness, the disappointment, suffering, and repentance, all calmed at last in perfect peace, could have found its experience in no other place.[1]

When, a little later (April 21, 1142), Abelard died, Peter the Venerable, loyal to the last, wrote to Heloise: "Thus the man who by his singular authority in science was known to nearly all the world and was illustrious wherever he was known, learned in the school of Christ to remain meek and lowly and, as it is but right to believe, he has returned to Him." The good Abbot of Cluny did even more than this, for he personally conveyed the body of his friend to Paraclete to the

[1] AT VESPERS

(One of ninety-three hymns written by Abelard for the use of Heloise and her nuns.)

Oh, what shall be, oh, when shall be, that holy Sabbath day,
Which heavenly care shall ever keep and celebrate alway,
When rest is found for weary limbs, when labour hath reward,
When everything for evermore is joyful in the Lord?

Then, there secure from every ill, in freedom we shall sing
The songs of Zion hindered here by days of suffering,
And unto Thee, our gracious Lord, our praises shall confess
That all our sorrow hath been good, and Thou by pain canst bless.

guardianship of Heloise, comforting her in touching letters with his confidence in their future reunion.

Saint Bernard in his contest with Abelard and in his harsh judgment of Peter the Venerable, shows the unlovely side of his nature, and yet his intolerance was perfectly in accord with the simplicity and singleness of his faith. He was a man of many contrasts, personally all gentleness and humility, but when he believed himself the mouth-piece of God he lashed hypocrites even when his superiors. So he once reminded the Pope that the dignity with which he was clothed did not hinder him from being in himself naked, poor, and miserable, made for labour and not for honours, and that a pope without wisdom gains no more respect from the elevation of his position than a gibbering ape upon a roof. When Suger, Abbot of Saint Denis, neglected his Abbey to become Prime Minister, and entertained the King and his Court at Saint Denis, he reproached him with making his Abbey "a caserne of Satan and a barracks of thieves," and he condemned the Clunists for attempting to consecrate art to the service of God. "The walls of your churches," he wrote, "are resplendent while your poor lack

sustenance. The Church gilds her stones and leaves her children naked. With the silver of the miserable she charms the admiration of the rich."

The Abbey of Citeaux itself, founded as a reform and a protest against the luxury of Cluny, seemed to Bernard worldly in its ambitions, and he retired to the priory of Clairvaux, where he instituted a sterner rule.

His cherished plans perished. The crusade which we will find him preaching at Vezelay was a mistake; even his convent of Clairvaux after his death became wealthy and corrupt, the Church for whose supremacy he had laboured submitted to the monarchy, heresy, whose seeds in Abelard's philosophy he thought he had blotted out, sprang up a fruitful crop all over France.

"What, then," asks an eminent writer,[1] "was the work of Bernard? The futile opposition of a man of genius to the currents of his century, perhaps a retarding force in the normal development of the age . . . he has nevertheless left to the world the example of an energy and a virtue which surpassed humanity."

[1] Achille Lachaise in the *Revue Historique*, 1899.

V

THE ABBEY OF VEZELAY

Well worthy a visit, apart from any historical interest, is the Citadel-Abbey of Vezelay.

True, it lies some twelve miles from the nearest railroad station (and from the only endurable hostelry, Avallon), but this will give excuse for a driving tour through the Morvan, a northern spur of the Cevennes, and one of the most picturesque regions in eastern France.

There is, moreover, a peculiar fitness in visiting and studying this monastery in connection with Cluny, for the development of the domination of the great Abbey which we have considered is best traced in the history of her dependencies, and in none more typically than in that of the Abbey of Vezelay. It gives us also one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of Saint Bernard, showing him to us at the very culminating point of his popularity, when he must have felt that he had achieved a triumph worthy of his life of sacrifice.

It was not until the year 1096 that this Abbey submitted to the spiritual rule of

Cluny and accepted Artaud, a Clunisian, as its Abbot. In doing so it converted a powerful rival into an ally; and Vezelay had need of assistance in holding its own against two adversaries of a more mercenary character than the great Order which sought only the prestige of becoming its *maison-mère*. The Bishop of Autun and the Comte de Nevers both claimed seigneurial rights over the Abbey under the feudal system, claims which were enforced by the Count of Nevers by forays upon the estates of the Abbey; for Vezelay had prospered and was rich in this world's goods. An earlier Abbot had discovered (invented, says the chronicle) the relics of Saint Mary Magdalen, and pilgrims flocked from every quarter to venerate them. The townspeople outside the Abbey walls drove a thriving trade as innkeepers in providing for their entertainment. Travelling merchants had followed the pilgrims and had found such a good mart for their wares that they established themselves as citizens in the town, which took upon itself the aspect of a fair. A market was thus formed for the products of the region and as the townspeople and the monks became opulent the greed of the Bishop of Autun and the Count of Nevers to

CHAPTER HOUSE OF THE ABBEY OF VEZELAY.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

collect their taxes and tithes became more rapacious. But Abbot Artaud was a man of fearless courage, challenging them to attack an Abbey of the powerful order of Cluny. He not only held his own against foes without, but he beautified the Abbey within, building the magnificent Church of the Madeleine in the style of the Burgundian Romanesque which his brother Clunisians had adopted.[1]

The domineering Abbot was to pay dearly for his love of building. To defray the cost he imposed taxes on the townspeople, which so infuriated them that they assassinated him before the altar of the new church.

But a more ambitious and abler Abbot than Artaud presently took his seat, in the person of Ponce de Montboissier, who, though own brother of Peter the Venerable, defended the independence of Vezelay against all contestants, including Cluny itself. He lived to see the Count of Nevers annihilated, the Bishop of Autun humiliated, the turbulent

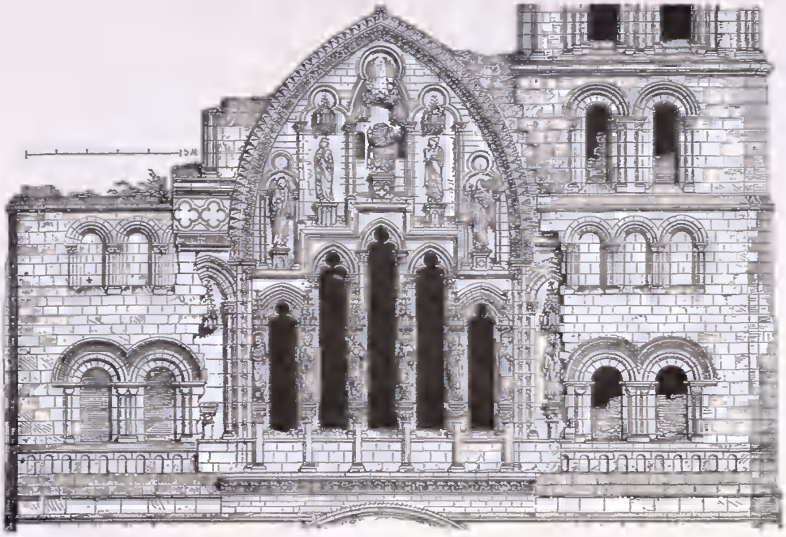
[1] It was a successor of Abbot Artaud who built the ogival choir and transept and who introduced the five elaborate Gothic windows with trefoil arches over the portal, so richly ornamented with statues in canopied niches. The illustration from a drawing before the restoration by Viollet le Duc, plainly shows the introduction of this group of later windows into the façade of the original Romanesque edifice.

commune pacified, and his own Alma Mater, Cluny, bereft of her spiritual child.

For after the rule of Peter the Venerable the great mother Abbey entered upon the days of her decadence. Wealth had brought enervation, and the truly religious both within and without her domination were eager for reform.

The Abbot Ponce de Montboissier was not only daring but astute; he could discern the tendency of the time, and though he was not himself a religious enthusiast he knew how to make such enthusiasm serve his ends. A great popular movement was stirring France. The cry rang through Christendom, "Protect the holy city from the infidel." The King of France, Louis VII., had sins upon his conscience for which he was sincerely repentant, but his chief councillor, Suger, opposed a crusade. For once the astute Abbot of Saint Denis overreached himself: his cold worldly wisdom arguing the inadvisability of the crusade fell upon ears stirred by the more potent reasoning of Bernard: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The Abbot Ponce saw his opportunity and offered Vezelay as the rendezvous for more complete discussion of the subject. The



CHURCH OF LA MADELEINE, ABBEY OF VEZELAY.
From *Villes du Departement de l' Yonne*, by Victor Petit.

CHURCH OF THE ABBEY OF LA CHAISE DIEU.
By permission of Neurdein Frères.

townspeople were delighted at this stroke of diplomacy. It meant for them much that an international exposition does for a city in our own time—a fictitious impulse to all its industries and much gainful pillage of the great convocation of pilgrims. It meant also entertainment, excitement, the pageant of chivalry and royalty, miracle plays and thrilling of pulses under sensational preaching for the devout, and clandestine amusements of a questionable character for the ungodly. For months beforehand the country round poured its stores of food and drink and forage into Vezelay. There never was a more popular Abbot than Ponce de Montboissier, and his praise was in the mouths of the very communards who had howled for the death of Artaud, for to Vezelay on the following summer came the King and Queen with their Court, with prelates and knights and an innumerable multitude of lesser folk. Hither, too, the Abbot had induced Bernard to come to address the vast assembly from a pavilion pitched on the plain outside the walls. The saint gave free rein to his impassioned eloquence. The beautiful Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine sat beside him, "but," says the chronicle, "no one noticed her."

Wild enthusiasm greeted the words with which he closed his long harangue:

"Christian warriors, He who gave His life for you to-day demandeth yours; illustrious knights, noble defenders of the Cross, call to mind the example of your fathers who conquered Jerusalem, and whose names are written in heaven! The living God hath charged me to tell you that He will punish those who will not defend Him against His enemies. Fly to arms, and let Christendom re-echo with the words of the prophet—Woe to him who dyeth not his sword with blood!"

Shouts of "God wills it!" rent the air. The King, kneeling, received the cross, and the reluctant Abbot Suger, whose practical mind foresaw that the crusade must be a failure, was left to carry on the government of France in the absence of its sovereign.

Abbot Ponce, as shrewd as Suger, knew that crusading could bring him only hardship and danger and prudently remained in his comfortable Abbey. His deep-laid schemes had prospered. Vezelay, rich and illustrious, now stood clear from all domination but his own, and even the truculent Count of Nevers had been so smitten to the heart by the preaching of Bernard that, confessing himself unworthy to fight for the Holy Sepulchre, he had renounced his great estates and taken upon himself the vows of a simple monk.

What other designs were floating in his ambitious brain we know not, for suddenly, in the midst of his triumphs, the great bell of the Madeleine tolled for the most arrogant of the Lord-Abbots of Vezelay—the high and mighty seigneur, Ponce de Montboissier.

The prestige of the hospitality extended to all France with so munificent a hand made Vezelay the rendezvous a half-century later for Richard Cœur de Lion and Philippe Auguste, as with their armies they set out upon another and equally disastrous crusade.

This was Vezelay's last great day. From this time she steadily declined in importance, and in 1310 the Abbot appealed to Philippe le Bel to protect the Abbey from the encroachments of her neighbours. The desired protection was granted, but at the expense of the autonomy of the Abbey so earnestly fought for by the Abbot Ponce. From that time Vezelay, as a dependency of the royal *demesne*, gained security but entered upon the period of the *abbés commendataires* so destructive to monastic institutions.

There are, however, interesting episodes in its history after this, as the career of the fighting Abbot Hughes de Maisonconte during the English invasion.

The impregnable, encircling walls and massive sentinel towers guarded town and Abbey inviolate through all this stormy century and later in the religious wars, when (as related in the story of The Golden Mystery), under the Abbot Odet de Coligny the Abbey of Vezelay was a Huguenot citadel.

A citadel it is to-day even in its ruin, and the conviction comes home in the very Church of the Madeleine that it is because Vezelay was a fortress that this noble church has survived its more magnificent mother, Cluny.

The supremacy of Cluny dwindled in the twelfth century, as the sterner Cistercians rose to preponderance, but of the powerful Abbey of Citeaux and Bernard's famous Clairvaux little remains to attract the traveller.

"The history of mediæval monasticism," says Professor Emerton, "is the history of a series of great revivals. The singular thing is that when the monasteries had got into a bad way it never occurred to those most interested that the fault might be in the monastic principle itself, but they invariably concluded that this principle had not been carried out thoroughly enough."

The order of the Carthusians was also a protest against the luxury of the Benedictines, while the Franciscans and Dominicans arose

as reformers of the relaxed rule of the Cistercians, and later the Feuillants, the nuns of Port Royal, and the monks of La Trappe, with the earlier Jesuits, practised most conscientiously the severest rigours which humanity could endure.

It is our business "not to criticise but, what is far more difficult, to understand."

The best thought, the most fervent aspiration, the most loving charity, was for centuries enshrined in the Abbeys, and though France has repudiated them the world, in spite of their mistakes, must look back upon their work with admiration and gratitude.

The poet Gresset, in leaving the monastic life, thus voices the sentiments of modernity:

"Adieux aux Jésuites à M. l'Abbé Marguet.

". . . Né pour l'independance
Devois je plus long temps souffrir la violence,
D'une lente captivité?
Mais ami, t'avouerai-je un tendre sentiment
Que ton cœur génereux reconnoitra sans peine?
Oui, même en la brisant, j'ai regretté ma chaine!

. . . . . .

Oui, j'ai vu des mortels, j'en dois ici l'aveu,
Trop combattus, connus trop peu;
J'ai vu des esprits vrais, des cœurs incorruptibles
Voués à la patrie, à leurs rois, à leur Dieu,

À leurs propres maux insensibles,
Prodigues de leurs jours, tendres, parfaits amis,
Et souvent bienfaiteurs paisibles
De leurs plus fougueux ennemis;
Trop estimés en fin pour être moins hais.
Que d'autres s'exhalant dans leur haine insensée,
En reproches injurieux,
Cherchent en les quittant à les rendre odieux,
Pour moi, fidele au vrai, fidele à ma pensée,
C'est ainsi qu'en partant je leurs fais mes adieux! "

APPENDIX

NOTE A (CHAPTER III)

Another sermon to the birds is given in "The Life of Saint Francis of Assisi" from the *Legende Santa Francisci* of Saint Bonaventure, by Miss Lockhart:

"And as he was going his way he beheld some trees whereon sat birds well-nigh without number, whereat Saint Francis marvelled and said to his companions, Ye shall wait for me here upon the way and I will preach unto my little sisters the birds . . . and he said: Much bounden are ye, my little sisters, unto God your Creator. Ye sow not, neither do ye reap, and God feedeth you and giveth you the streams and fountains for your drink and the high trees whereon to make your nests. And because ye know not how to spin or sew, God clotheth you. Wherefore your Creator loveth you much, and therefore, my little sisters, beware of the sin of ingratitude, and study always to give praises unto God."

NOTE B (CHAPTER III)

"What 's his disease?
A very pestilent disease, my lord,
They call lycanthropia.
Those that are possessed therewith imagine
Themselves to be transformed into wolves,

Steal forth to churchyards in the dead of night
And dig dead bodies up, as two nights since
One met the duke 'bout midnight in a lane
Behind Saint Mark's Church, with the leg of a man
Upon his shoulder; and he howled fearfully,
Said he was a wolf, only the difference
Was, a wolf's skin was hairy on the outside,
His on the inside."

NOTE C (CHAPTER III)

John Addington Symonds says of the lords of Baux:

"The stern and barren rock from which they sprang and the comet of their scutcheon are the true symbols of their nature. History records no end of their ravages and slaughters. It is a tedious catalogue of blood: how one prince put to fire and sword the whole town of Courthezon; how another was stabbed in prison by his wife; how a third besieged the castle of his niece, and sought to undermine her chamber, knowing her the while to be in childbed; how a fourth was flayed alive outside the walls of Avignon.

"There is nothing terrible, splendid, and savage belonging to feudal history of which an example may not be found in the *Annals of Les Baux*, as narrated by their chronicler, Jules Canouge."

The heraldic symbol of the comet and their battle-cry, "Au hasard Balthazar," are explained when we remember that the name Bauz is derived from Balthazar, which, again, is the Greek equivalent for

Belshazzar; and the lords of Baux were as proud to believe themselves descended from the son of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as from the Balthazar who was one of the three kings who saw the star in the east, and followed it, bringing gifts to the new-born Christ.

Vidal has not been traduced in this story. He says of himself in what has been rightly called the "*chef d'œuvre de la gasconade*":

"In boldness I am as good as Roland and Olivier. Messengers come to me with rings of gold and such love letters that my heart rejoices. In all things I show myself a knight. I know the whole business of love and all that pertains to gallantry, for you never saw one so charming in a lady's chamber nor one so proud and so mighty in arms, for which reason even such as do not see me are afraid of me."

(See *The Troubadours at Home*, by Professor Justin H. Smith, chapter xviii. and notes.)

NOTE A (CHAPTER V)

There is no hunt so interesting, because none so elusive, as the hunt for a particular story which has half revealed itself in some old document and then incontinently taken to the woods. For years I had been intrigued by this beautiful series of tapestries. At each return to the Cluny Museum the Lady of the Unicorn attracted and mystified me. Experts could only hazard the opinion that it was from the Aubusson manufactory with a guess at the date, and it was reserved for a writer of fiction to put me on the track of the facts.

Wandering one summer through George Sand's enchanting country of Berry and Marche, and using her books as our guide, we came upon Bourganeuf, with its commandery of Knights Hospitallers and its legend of Aubusson and Zizim. Close at hand was the manufactory of Aubusson and, forming a triangle with these points, the old castle of Boussac. Somewhere in this region we felt the mysterious lady must have lived and have known both the Commander of the Hospitallers and his romantic prisoner, and suddenly George Sand, in her *Promenades autour d'un Village*, opened the door of the castle and showed us the tapestries as she saw them in 1857:

"It is to be wished," she wrote, "that the administration of Fine Arts would cause copies to be made. I says copies, because the same *entourage* is required for the feudal château and the effigy of its beautiful châtelaine which is there in its natural frame."

Madame Sand's description was a complete identification of the Cluny tapestries, the quarry whose trail I had so long sought:

"It is the entire life of a *Merveilleuse* of that time. The chic in the cut of the garments, the brilliancy of the agrafes of precious stones, and the transparency of the gauze is rendered with a facility which time has not destroyed. In many of the panels a young girl dressed more simply is represented at the lady's side offering her flowers or jewels, and elsewhere her favourite bird. . . . A white unicorn and a lion hold lances with pennons. And here is what demands a commentary—the *crescent* is sown in profusion on the standards and the lance shafts."

Madame Sand then quotes the conclusions of her friend, Monsieur de la Touche, who in turn gives his authorities, and after this rousing of the game, with such chroniclers as Philippe de Commines and the Jesuit Rocoles in full cry, it was not difficult to run it to earth in the legend of the "Blonde Agnes."

NOTE A (CHAPTER VI)

A Catholic historian, Puy Laurens, gives this account of the deed:

"The Count Simon, having thus taken the castle, caused the above-named Aimeri, a notable nobleman, to be hanged upon a gibbet; also a small number of knights. The other nobles, to the number of about eighty, were put to the sword, and lastly, some three hundred heretics, burned in this world, were thus given over by him to eternal fire; and Guirande, the lady of the château, cast into a well, was there crushed with stones."

NOTE B (CHAPTER VI)

For the unvarnished historical facts from which this story is drawn, see *Bernard Delicieux et l'Inquisition Albigeoise*, by B. Haureau, Membre de l'Institut.

NOTE A (CHAPTER VII)

Gresset describes the linguistic accomplishments acquired by Ver Vert during his voyage down the Loire in the following terms:

"Il entonna tous les horribles mots
Qu'il avait su rapporter des bateaux.

Jurant, sacrant d'une voix dissolue
Faisant passer tout l'enfer en revue.
'Jour de Dieu! Mor! Mille pipes de diables!'
Toute la grille à ces mots effroyables,
Tremble d'horreur; les nonnettes sans voix
Font en fuyant mille signes de croix."

The poem entitled *Le Triomphe de l'Amant Vert* was written for Marguerite and has long been the puzzle of critics. Grave discussion as to who this "Green Lover" may have been, (who is said to have died of grief and to have sought his lady through the realms of Hades,) has from time to time occupied the pens of savants. One believed that the author of the poem, Jean Lemaire, meant thus to designate himself, and our critic marvels that the poet could have had the audacity to imagine that such public declaration of his love would be pleasing to the Duchess of Savoy.

And yet the meaning is sufficiently apparent. The "Green Lover" boasts his facility in language, in spite of his birth in Ethiopia, and laments that he could not change his clothing to black when his mistress was in mourning.

"Plut a Dieu que mon corps assez beau
Fut transformé pour cette heure en corbeau,
Et mon collier vermeil et pourpurin,
Fut aussi brun qu'un Maure ou Barbarin
Lors te plairais je, et ma triste laideur
Me vaudrait mieux que ma belle verdeur."

It is even possible that the princes of the house of Savoy regarded the parrot as a mascot, for, oddly

enough, in the preceding century the only gift which Count Amadeus VI., returning from an unsuccessful crusade, brought his wife was a parrot. (See *The Romance of the House of Savoy*, by Althea Wiel, vol. i., p. 220.)

NOTE A (CHAPTER XV)

A mystery surrounds the death of the Duchess of Montbazon. The explanation ordinarily given is that the Duchess died suddenly from a malignant fever; that for some reason, either because the coffin was too short or from a supposed necessity of their ghoulish craft, the embalmers severed her head from her body and laid it in the dish in the boudoir while continuing their task in the adjoining chamber.

This story is most improbable. Had her husband survived her the dealings of the De Rohans in the past with their unfaithful wives would rouse a suspicion as to the manner of her taking-off. But the Duke of Beaufort was also violent and brutal enough to have killed her in a moment of jealousy.

He was the proprietor, as we know, of the neighbouring château of Chenonceaux, where he had hidden from Mazarin. If the belief of the fishwives of the Halles that he was living at this time was true another solution to the problem is imaginable.

Of the Abbé de Rancé after his conversion we have the most authentic and precise information, both from his own writings and those of his contemporaries.

Saint Simon wrote in his memoirs: "Monsieur de la Trappe had for me a charm which attached me to him, and the holiness of the place enchanted me. I returned to it every year for weeks at a time."

On one occasion the Duke took the painter Rigaud with him, who executed a portrait of Rancé from memory.

A tradition lingers in the neighbourhood of La Trappe to the effect that the Abbot who succeeded Rancé showed to visitors a reliquary containing a skull which he assured them was that of the Duchess of Montbazon, and Chateaubriand in his Life of the Abbé, concludes: "It is not improbable that Rancé obtained the relic which he adored."

(See also, *Les Veritables Motifs de la Conversion de l'Abbé de La Trappe*, M. Laroque, Cologne, MDCLXXXV.

NOTE B (CHAPTER XV)

Besides the charters and deeds of Burgundy, the Abbey possessed hundreds of manuscripts, nearly all the work of its own monks. While they are principally theological, the collection also comprises two curious treatises on medicine by Averroes and an anonymous monk of Monte Cassino; an essay by Boccaccio, "Concerning Mountains, Fountains, and Rivers," and a treatise on physics as taught at Cluny by Dom Gand. There are also works on law and some transcriptions of the classics. The initial letters and illuminated borders of the missals and other books executed by monks of the middle ages, now preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, show how artistic and beautiful was the work of the masters of this art. The books are many of them bound in repoussée gold and silver set with gems and

relics, or in panels of ivory exquisitely traced, or in velvet embroidered with gold thread and pearls.

These gems of art were executed in unheated and in poorly lighted scriptoria. The transcriber of Saint Jerome's Commentary says: "While I wrote I froze, and what I was not able to finish during the day was ended by moonlight. (*Dum scripsit friguit, et quod cum lumine solis scribere non posuit perfecit lumine noctis.*)"

Only a few names of artists have come down to us. Jean Bourdichon is high upon the list as the illuminator of the *Livre d'Heures* of Anne de Bretagne, so remarkable for its botanical and entomological accuracy. (See reproduction in colour.)

Good King René is famed as an illuminator, and the Abbeys of Montmajour, Saint Martial, and Saint Denis are eminent in this exquisite art.

Beautiful examples of Jean Foucquet's admired work may be seen in the collection of the late Duc d'Aumale at Chantilly; but no French illuminators were so revered as the Frati Jacopo and Silvestro, whose right hands are preserved as sacred relics at the Abbey of Camaldoli.

The three favourite illuminators of that great patron of art, the Duc de Berry, were Adrien Beauneveu, Jacquemart de Hendin, and Pierre de Lemburg. Two reproductions from MSS. executed for the Duc de Berry (in the fourteenth century) are used as tail-pieces in this volume. The figures with clasped hands (page 392) are the duke and his bride, Jeanne de Boulogne. The ivy vine is a characteristic motive of this period.

Attention may be drawn in this connection to the symbolism in the head-pieces so carefully studied from mediæval sources by Miss Eleanor Eayres Gardner.

Chapter I.—Trefoil and seven stars, symbols of mystery.

Chapter II.—Copy of original sign of Frère Placide's shop, supported by similar scroll-work containing the words *Requiescat in Pace.*

Chapter III.—Tracery from illumination by monks of Montmajour. Butterflies escaping from jaws of wolves. Central vignette, cloister and donjon-keep of Abbey of Montmajour.

Chapter IV.—Madonna, symbol of Saint Bernard's vision. Three mitres = three bishoprics refused by him. Beehive = Abbey of Clairvaux.

Chapter V.—Chivalric weapons.

Chapter VI.—Coat-of-arms of Albi, with dripping daggers, symbolic of Inquisition. Blackberry vine, thorns = tribulation; fruit = success.

Chapter VII.—Parrot and mistletoe.

Chapter VIII.—Church and fleur-de-lys.

Chapter IX.—Flageolet wreathed in lentil foliage, the symbol of Saint Bruno.

Chapter X.—Crown of thorns; eglantine.

Chapter XI.—Dragon.

Chapter XII.—Bell of Mont Saint Michel.

Chapter XIII.—Galleon and emblems of Mercury = flight; crozier = emblems of an abbot.

Chapter XIV.—Symbol of sacrifice. Emblems of Joan of Arc.

Chapter XV.—Pilgrim staves and shells.

Our cloister gleanings are ended, but by no means finished, for no reference has been made to the Abbeys of middle and south-western France, and this from no lack of material. It is almost unpardonable to pass over Fontevrault, so intimately connected with the Plantagenets, and Sainte Trinité of Vendome with the Bourbons, while the entire Parisian group, and especially the vanished Temple, and Saint Germain des Prés, so pre-eminent that the French refer to it simply as "L'Abbaye," cry shame upon our neglect, while the good nuns of Port Royal and the naughty ones of Chelles and many another nunnery demand "*Place aux dames.*" But fie upon our greediness! Shall we leave nothing untouched for those who come later? And gentle George Herbert reminds us that

"The courteous guest
Will no more talk all than eat all the feast."

So gentle reader—*Vale et benidicité!*

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